United Nations A/50/PV.17

General Assembly

Official Records

Fiftieth Session

17th plenary meeting
Tuesday, 3 October 1995, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Freitas do Amaral . . . . . (Portugal)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Peerthum (Mauritius), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 9 (*continued*)

General debate

The Acting President: I call first on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Uganda, His Excellency Mr. Ruhakana Rugunda.

Mr. Rugunda (Uganda): Allow me on behalf of the Ugandan delegation to convey our warm greetings to Mr. Diogo Freitas do Amaral on the occasion of his election to the presidency of the fiftieth session of the General Assembly. His election does great honour to his country, Portugal, with which Uganda enjoys very cordial relations. We are confident that Mr. Freitas do Amaral will guide the Assembly's deliberations to a successful conclusion.

Allow me also to pay special tribute to His Excellency Mr. Amara Essy, Foreign Minister of Côte d'Ivoire, for the skilful manner in which he presided over the work of the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly.

I salute the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, for his tireless efforts in the service of our Organization.

Fifty years ago, in the aftermath of the Second World War, with its destructive nationalism, economic and social depression and the attendant social dislocation, the United Nations was established. It was founded by men and women who were determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. They created the United Nations as the only universal international organization that would exist to cope with global problems and ensure that the international community enjoyed peace and prosperity. The United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights provided the bedrock for a new system of rights and obligations for the promotion of international peace and security.

The new order, organized on the basis of universality and sovereign equality, was intended to encompass all nations, large and small, strong and weak, in order to promote the well-being of all peoples. The United Nations thus emerged as a beacon of hope out of the ruins and darkness of the Second World War. Today this vision remains as valid as it was 50 years ago. It is for that reason that we reaffirm our confidence in the Organization and its global mandate.

In the five decades of the existence of the United Nations, the world has witnessed remarkable changes. The communications revolution and the globalization of the world economy have transformed the world into a global village and have increased interdependence among nations. The cold war, which dominated the post-War era, ended, with the favourable dramatic transformation

95-86196 (E)

This record contains the original text of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, *within one month of the date of the meeting*, to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, Room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

of East-West relations. Over 100 States which were colonial dependencies in 1945 achieved independence. We also witnessed the birth of a free, non-racial and democratic South Africa and the elimination of the obnoxious system of apartheid.

While the end of the cold war has reduced tension between the major Powers and has facilitated the resolution of a number of regional conflicts, we continue to witness the proliferation of intra-State conflicts. These are new challenges which call for more innovative approaches and which underscore the continuing relevance of the United Nations.

We believe that the United Nations should address in a concrete and decisive manner the issue of socio-economic development, without which peace and security cannot be sustained. The United Nations and the international community have to renew their resolve to eradicate poverty and deprivation. This spectre of poverty and deprivation is rampant in Africa and in the least developed countries. We should act collectively and decisively to change this situation. The fiftieth anniversary celebrations are a fitting occasion to make this solemn commitment.

It is no coincidence that our region, Africa, which is the least developed in the world, is also the most affected by strife and conflict. In order to put an end to this we need to foster a comprehensive approach which addresses the root causes of these conflicts and consolidates and guarantees durable peace and security. To this end, we must, first of all, boost our capacity to anticipate and prevent conflicts before they occur, through preventive diplomacy. Secondly, we should be prepared to respond swiftly to emergency situations. And lastly, we must consolidate the peace by putting in place recovery and rehabilitation programmes in order to create the economic conditions for peace and stability.

In addition to this, there should be increased recognition of the role of the affected regions in the formulation of appropriate responses. It is for this reason that we consider the establishment of the Organization of African Unity mechanism for conflict prevention, management and resolution a timely and appropriate initiative. The Organization of African Unity decision to put in place a Central Organ for that mechanism was an equally positive development. We appeal to the international community to render the requisite financial and technical support to complement Africa's efforts to make these institutions work.

We salute the return of peace to Cambodia, Haiti, Mozambique and Angola, and we are encouraged by the positive developments in Liberia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Middle East. We commend the steps being taken by the Government in Rwanda to restore normalcy and national reconciliation, and we call for expeditious and full activation of the International Tribunal for Rwanda.

We believe that it is possible to contain the situation in Burundi and avoid the replication of the genocide that was perpetrated in Rwanda last year. We continue to be concerned about the situation in Somalia and call for reconciliation among the parties to the conflict there.

As regards Western Sahara, we urge all parties to exercise the statesmanship necessary to prepare the way for a just and durable solution. In order to consolidate and give hope to all these troubled parts of the world the international community must render all necessary support. We in Uganda will continue to contribute to conflict resolution, peacemaking and peace-keeping, within our capabilities.

The threat posed by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction remains a matter of grave concern to this Organization. We welcome the conclusion of the Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). This should strengthen the non-proliferation regime. If that is to be fully realized, it should be complemented by the entry into force of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction. It is deplorable that, in spite of the indefinite extension of the NPT, some countries have continued to carry out nuclear tests. This goes against the letter and the spirit of the understanding on the indefinite extension of the non-proliferation Treaty.

We note the progress made so far in the negotiations on a comprehensive test-ban Treaty, and we urge its early conclusion. We welcome various regional initiatives aimed at establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones and we support the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Africa as a contribution to global disarmament efforts.

In both its domestic and its foreign policy, Uganda accords high priority to the observance of human rights. We have entrenched in the new Constitution a human rights commission as an institutional framework for the development and observance of human rights. We wish

to express our appreciation to all countries and institutions that have supported us in our efforts to develop and strengthen human-rights monitoring and enforcement capabilities.

We have just completed the process of establishing a Constitution, aimed at consolidating the rule of law. The new Constitution was enacted on 22 September 1995 by a democratically elected Constituent Assembly and is due to be promulgated shortly. The Constitution paves the way to the holding of general and presidential elections, which are scheduled for early next year. This will enhance the empowerment of the people to take charge of their own governance and their own destiny.

The Government has made efforts to empower our people, especially women, young people and other vulnerable groups. Within the framework of the bottom-up Resistance Council system, the population has been mobilized and provided with modest capital — *entandikwa* — as part of our national endeavour to create productive and income-generating opportunities in order to improve the earning capacity of the family and, thus, improve the living conditions of the people.

As we celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, we should reaffirm our commitment to the primacy of the democratic principle at all levels, including that of the United Nations. It is in this context that Uganda supports restructuring of the Security Council to make it more transparent and democratic in its decision-making, and more representative of the increased membership of the United Nations.

In the same vein, we urge that the Bretton Woods institutions take into account the problems, concerns and aspirations of developing countries in the formulation and design of policies and programmes in order to respond to their social and economic needs.

Many developing countries continue to be adversely affected by the uneven and inequitable trends in the global economy. These trends have widened further the gap between the rich and the poor countries. The socio-economic situation in Africa is critical and continues to deteriorate. It is characterized by a weak physical and institutional infrastructure, underdeveloped human resources, epidemics and disease, lack of adequate shelter, poverty and deprivation. All these factors undermine peace and stability, and this, in turn, hampers growth and development.

We have undertaken bold economic and political reforms in Uganda with a view to creating an environment conducive to the consolidation of social and economic progress. These reforms have been characterized by the attainment of basic macro-economic stability and the enhancement of democracy and the rule of law, and they have stimulated reasonable economic growth and social progress. In spite of these modest achievements our countries continue to depend heavily on the export of primary commodities, which do not attract fair prices in international markets. There has also been a steady decline in the availability of both domestic and external resources for development. To compound the situation, most of our countries are saddled with heavy debts, the servicing of which is no longer sustainable.

All these and other factors have contributed to the marginalization of Africa and have made it difficult for the continent to benefit from the positive impulses of globalization and the liberalization of world trade. These issues were reviewed at the high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council, which addressed the theme of African development and implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, and in the ongoing discussion here at the United Nations about the mid-term review of the Global Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s.

The two meetings agreed that the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s and the global Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s remained largely unimplemented. We should seize the opportunity provided by the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations to decide on concrete actions that will give hope to the peoples of Africa and of the least developed countries.

The stagnation and decline in official development assistance (ODA) are disturbing. We are equally concerned at the wavering commitment towards the eleventh replenishment of the international development assistance fund. We urge our development partners to fulfil the internationally agreed obligations with regard to official development assistance. This would be a fitting and tangible show of solidarity with Africa and, indeed, the least developed countries.

Our external indebtedness and debt-servicing obligations have reached unsustainable levels. We therefore call for an urgent once-and-for-all development-oriented initiative on all types of debts, which could

include the following: first, an enhancement of the Naples terms and an improvement in its accessibility; and, secondly, a significant initiative on multilateral debts, including a softening of the financing terms of International Monetary Fund (IMF) loans to make it IDA-comparable. These initiatives could be achieved through the sale of IMF gold stocks and by creating an appropriate debt-relief facility. We believe these actions will release much-needed resources, which are currently going into the debt-servicing of development activities, including the eradication of poverty.

At the moment Africa accounts for a meagre 2.4 per cent of world merchandise trade. In the context of the Uruguay Round agreements, it is estimated that the continent could lose up to $2.6 billion annually in the course of the initial years of the implementation of the agreement. By contrast, global trade will be boosted by $500 billion annually. The legitimate concerns of Africa and the least developed countries have been identified and specific measures to address them have been recommended by both the Ministerial Decision of Marrakesh and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). For Africa to benefit from the liberalization of world trade, these measures, including capacity-building, compensation, enhanced-market-access provisions and financial assistance towards institutional and economic transformation, must be implemented fully and without delay.

To assist in the follow-up and implementation of the Uruguay Round agreements, two institutions are significant and must be strengthened and supported — UNCTAD as the institution with a specific focus on trade and development issues, especially as they relate to developing countries; and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) because of its role in the promotion of industrialization.

We note the ongoing discussions under the open-ended ad hoc Working Group of the General Assembly on an Agenda for Development. It is our hope that this process will generate specific measures and commitments to address the specific problems of developing countries. We also hope that it will help to forge consensus on development which takes into account, and builds on, the commitments and programmes of action already agreed on in the series of United Nations conferences that have been held since 1990.

Uganda is concerned about the serious problem posed by the rapid growth and spread of water hyacinth on Lake Victoria and other lakes and rivers in the Nile valley. This has adversely affected the ecological balance of our waters and the livelihood of our populations, who depend on fishing as a means of survival. Besides, the hyacinth is threatening to choke the Owen Falls Dam — our only major source of hydroelectric power. It has disrupted our water transportation system, which is very important for a land-locked country such as Uganda. We make an urgent appeal to the international community to extend support to enable us to address the problem of water hyacinth.

We consider South-South cooperation to be an important aspect of development cooperation. The sharing and pooling of information, knowledge, markets and resources are some of the ways in which developing countries can promote their growth and development. To this end we are active participants in all arrangements for cooperation in our subregion and support the establishment of the African Economic Community. We believe that these arrangements and the institutions established to promote them, such as the South Centre, should be supported by the international community.

The United Nations has over the years provided a forum for intensive dialogue on all issues. Through a series of global conferences, it has helped to forge international consensus on global problems — issues such as the environment, population, the status of women, human rights, development, and many more. Its specialized agencies have made an invaluable contribution in their respective spheres of activity and have provided humanitarian and development assistance to many parts of the world. In recent years, despite drastic limitations on personnel and resources, the United Nations has responded to the dramatic rise in the demand for peace-keeping and other emergency operations throughout the world. These are laudable accomplishments, which should strengthen our resolve and our confidence in support of the Organization.

As we stand in the twilight of the twentieth century and approach the dawn of the new millennium, we should use the occasion provided by the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations to strengthen the Organization. We should demonstrate our dedication to the Organization and its component parts by providing it with the resources necessary for the accomplishment of its immense mandate. Our challenge is to bequeath to succeeding generations a democratic, transparent and more effective United Nations.

The Acting President: I now call upon the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Arab Republic of Egypt, His Excellency Mr. Amre Moussa.

Mr. Moussa (Egypt)(*interpretation from Arabic*): It gives me great pleasure to extend to the President, and to his friendly country, Portugal, our congratulations on his election as President of the General Assembly for this historic session, which crowns 50 years of international work under the banner of the United Nations in the service of humanity, individuals and peoples.

I should also like to express our profound appreciation to His Excellency Mr. Amara Essy, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Côte d'Ivoire, for his wise conduct of the work of the forty-ninth session and for his valuable efforts in the preparatory work for the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary.

We now live in an age wherein the international map of political relations is being redrawn, side by side with the reshaping of the scales of economic relations and, probably, the essence of existing social and cultural systems. The universal nature of issues and the similarity of the problems facing our contemporary societies have become the principal feature of our world. Consequently, the only way to deal with such issues and problems is to promote and rationalize international cooperation, since the majority of the problems we face today cannot be dealt with unilaterally at a time when the fluctuations of financial markets, the transactions of transnational corporations and the impact of information networks and communication satellites all transcend the national boundaries of States. We cannot hope to succeed in dealing with problems against such a complex backdrop without international and collective action in the interests of the entire human race. In this, we see a very significant role for the United Nations in formulating the modern concepts needed in dealing with problems in such a difficult and complex era.

Although the ending of the cold war did remove tremendous obstacles that, for so long, had adversely affected efforts of international cooperation in all fields, this, in itself, has not been conducive to the spontaneous emergence of a new international order based on legality, justice, and democracy, that is capable of maintaining peace and bringing prosperity to peoples. This requires a consensual vision of what the content and rules of such a new international order should be. It also requires the dissipation of the growing fears that many countries now harbour as a result of the tendency to entrench policies of double standards, to look for some ideological or intellectual foe to demonize and to make a target for criticism, international mobilization and techniques of subjugation.

This can be seen clearly in the performance of the Security Council and in its hesitant posture when it comes to facing up to certain situations, probably because of the lack of the necessary political will, or to the fact that that will falls hostage to conflicting attitudes. Again, this may be due to the fact that we, as an international community, are still unable to develop a concept of a system of collective security that would be in consonance with the provisions of the United Nations Charter.

In this connection, let us call to mind the tragedies of ethnic genocide perpetrated against the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Having done this, let us call to mind the ability, the inability or the ambivalence demonstrated in reacting to those international crimes and the adverse impact they have had on the credibility of the world order, of which the United Nations continues to be a principal cornerstone. We need to pause and review the collective-security system and how we can improve it. We must also consider the need for a parallel economic- and social-security system in the light of the global trend towards market economies and in the light also of the achievements made in the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and the related problems in the developing world, which constitutes the overwhelming majority of the human race.

It is no longer possible to face up to the challenges of tomorrow with the methods of yesterday, especially that the concept of security is no longer limited to territories or national boundaries at a time when most armed conflicts take place within such national boundaries, and when the lack of economic and social development has become a universally grave problem. It follows from this that the challenge which now faces the international community represented by the United Nations has to do with the extent of the Organization's ability to address such new issues, with the degree of its success in forging an international and democratic consensus in that regard, and with the presence or absence of the political will to enable the United Nations to perform its role through the provision of the resources it must have in order for it to do so.

The United Nations has made an outstanding contribution towards the promotion of international awareness of issues which stand as milestones in the history of the twentieth century, prominent among which

are decolonization, the eradication of apartheid and dealing with the issues of economic and social development and human rights. Such concepts have now become the very foundations of civilized international behaviour.

Having said this, we must say that what the future requires is a new universal social contract as I called for in my statement before the General Assembly at the forty-seventh session, in commenting on the Secretary-General's "Agenda for Peace" submitted in 1992. A series of international conferences on children, on the environment, on human rights, on population, on social development and on women have provided the international community with a wealth of programmes of action and ideas which could provide solid basis for drawing up the universal social contract we propose in order for our work to lead to development, security and peace.

Whether the United Nations is able to forge such consensus, will depend on its ability to close the credibility gap from which it has suffered over the past few years. No amount of administrative reform or restructuring, however great, would enable it to rise to the demands of this new era unless such reform is accompanied by the mobilization of the political will to support the United Nations and to uphold its credibility together with a process of conceptual reform that should be inspired by the ideals and objectives of the Charter and should aim at formulating a modern programme of action that responds to the realities, issues and challenges of today's world.

In order for the United Nations to lead international action in such directions, it must enjoy financial stability. Such stability cannot be achieved without our collective commitment to pay in full our assessed contributions to the Organization's budget. Egypt hopes that the Member States shall seize the opportunity of the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Organization, truly a historic occasion, by issuing a declaration committing all Members, and especially all the States permanent members of the Security Council, to pay all assessed contributions and all arrears before the end of the year, to underscore our collective and genuine support for the Organization.

The General Assembly has achieved a great deal over the past 50 years in the political, economic, social and environmental fields and has contributed to the establishment of principles of international conduct in the spheres of democracy, respect for human rights and the codification and development of the principles of international law. However, the present era is a time for reformulating international relations, which requires the Assembly to perform a new role that promotes our collective capacity in the areas of security, development and international cooperation.

The Secretary-General's initiatives have also contributed to initiating a discussion of such hot issues as preventive diplomacy, peace-building in post-conflict situations, and coordination between the United Nations and other international and regional bodies. Such discussions have shown that there is a growing tendency to attach increasing importance to such issues, particularly on the part of the developing countries, a matter which highlights the need to promote the focal role of the General Assembly in building international consensus on such important issues.

The growing tendency to develop and reform the United Nations has focused attention on the Security Council's role and its performance. It was only natural that the General Assembly should have focused on discussing the rules and procedures that the Security Council should follow, particularly in the areas that need to be reviewed in the light of the latest developments in international affairs.

Any in-depth examination of the Council's role in the light of such developments would highlight the fact that many of the substantive and procedural aspects of the Council's work need to be reviewed, either by the Council itself or by the General Assembly if the Council should fail to do so. Since the end of the cold war, the Council's performance has tended to be characterized by certain features of which stand out the ineffectiveness of some of its resolutions, which lend themselves to many diverse interpretations and the tendency of some of those resolutions to aim at achieving political objectives whose objectivity is often debatable. All such aspects have an undoubted effect on the Council's credibility and efficacy.

The ongoing consultations in the Working Groups on how to improve the methods and procedures relating to the imposition and lifting of sanctions by the Council highlight the concern felt by the Member States over such matters. The point is that, in such cases, there should be a minimum level of safeguards, through the application of a set of agreed, uniform rules and procedures, in order for the imposing and lifting of sanctions to take place in a manner that strikes a balance between, on the one hand, the interests of the international community and, on the other, the extent of the human suffering endured by peoples on whom the sanctions are imposed.

The increasing importance the international community attaches to the question of reforming the Security Council has focused attention on a number of issues such as the need to improve the Council's practices and procedures, improve its performance and underscore the need for transparency in its work.

Egypt is convinced that there exists consensus of opinion that there is a need to increase the membership of the Council in order to expand international participation in discharging the major responsibility of the Organization and, thereby, to promote the Council's efficiency. We are also aware of the heavy responsibilities that go with membership in the Council. Proceeding from this and given Egypt's regional and international contributions in the contexts of Arab, African and Middle Eastern affairs and other spheres, together with its constant support of United Nations activities, we believe that Egypt is well placed in the ranks of the States qualified to bear the responsibility of membership in a new and expanded Security Council that would be more equitable and balanced in its representation of the different regions of the world.

When we speak of expanding Security Council membership, we do not have in mind a mere increase in the number of permanent seats allocated to the developed countries at the expense of the developing countries. What we have in mind is striking the necessary balance between the developed and the developing countries, by reinforcing the Council with a number of developing countries that are capable of shouldering such a responsibility and are capable of having the necessary impact at the regional and the international levels, in a manner that would make the Council more representative of international reality and, thereby, much more effective in dealing with international issues.

On the other hand, and from a more practical point of view, we believe that the ideas put forward by Egypt and by other countries concerning the addition of a number of new, rotating seats for a specific number of States would afford a larger number of States the opportunity of sharing in exercising the responsibilities of membership in the Council. We believe that this would promote the Council's role, enhance its credibility as a body that is truly representative and enrich it with the membership of countries that play important and effective roles in their regions.

I should like to seize this opportunity to put on record that Egypt welcomes the consultations the Security Council conducts with the countries that contribute troops to peace-keeping operations, and call upon the Council to adhere to the spirit of the provisions of Article 44 of the Charter by institutionalizing such consultations so that they may become an integral part of the decision-making process in relation to any peace-keeping operation. This would increase the chances of success for all such operations.

Here I must point out the vital role that could be performed by regional organizations and arrangements, in accordance with Chapter VIII of the Charter, in maintaining international peace and security in general and in the area of preventive diplomacy in particular. In this connection, I should like to mention that Egypt has set up the "Cairo Centre for the Settlement of Disputes and the Maintenance of Peace in Africa", and that we are confident that this Centre will receive the necessary assistance from the United Nations Department of Peace-keeping Operations and from States with the necessary expertise in this field.

The founding of the United Nations was contemporaneous with the beginning, 50 years ago, of a sad chapter in the evolution of the question of Palestine that triggered the Arab-Israeli conflict, with all the wars and tragedies that conflict entailed. Now, half a century later, we witness the beginnings of a comprehensive settlement to this question and the progress towards an Arab-Israeli peace. The United Nations has left its imprint on all aspects of the question of Palestine and the Arab-Israeli conflict. Some of its earlier resolutions sparked off the Arab-Israeli wars. Some others have laid the foundations for a peaceful settlement, such as Security Council resolution 242 (1967), and resolution 425 (1978) on Lebanon, the resolutions on Al-Quds, the refugees and the Palestinian people's right to self-determination.

A few days ago, in Washington, we witnessed the signing of the transitional-phase agreement by the Palestinian President, Yasser Arafat, and the Israeli Prime Minister, Yitzhak Rabin. This is a historic achievement towards resolving the Palestinian problem, as it initiates the second phase of the agreement concluded between the two parties and expands Palestinian authority to the West Bank. This is a sound move that brings Palestine closer to having a full-fledged Government with its legislative, executive and judiciary branches within a preliminary regional framework.

Although the agreement is transitional and represents a delicate balance of commitments between the emerging entity and Israel, it is undoubtedly a major

positive step at the strategic level. In practical terms, paves the way for the partition of the land of Palestine between Israel and the Palestinian entity which would reach completion only through the establishment of the Palestinian State on all the territories of Gaza and the West Bank. It is important to note here that the Palestinian parliament, which will be elected within a few months, will represent also the Palestinian people in Al-Quds.

Early on, Egypt had opted for the role of pioneer in the long march towards peace in the Middle East. Camp David and Taba, which were two outstanding milestones on this long march, have now been joined by a host of other landmarks along the road to peace. However, we are fully aware of the obstacles and pitfalls that are still in the way of a comprehensive peace, both on the Syrian and the Lebanese tracks, which must be reactivated urgently indeed, and on the Palestinian track, where everything depends on the honest and immediate implementation of the agreement and serious preparations for the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations on the final status. Egypt looks forward to a day in the near future when its vision of a new Middle East would materialize.

From this very rostrum, at the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly, on behalf of Egypt, I called upon the States and peoples of the Middle East to give thought to the shape of our relations in the post-settlement period. I invited them to join us in formulating the makings and foundations of new relations between the countries of the region that would rest squarely on three pillars: political settlement, economic and social development and regional security and arms control.

Our views in all this proceed from the conviction that peace will never become permanent and will never take root without a balanced and constructive interaction that would serve the common interests of all parties. I have touched upon the recent developments in the area of political settlement. I should like to add here that the framework of this settlement is still fragile and that it needs a great deal of prudence and caution. What is needed above all else in this respect is that all parties should abstain from taking any unilateral action that might infringe the rights of the other parties or pre-empt the final outcome of the negotiations.

The Economic Summit meeting for the Middle East and North Africa, held in Casablanca in October 1994, was an important step for regional economic cooperation. The participants in that meeting may recall Egypt's insistence that genuine peace is peace that prevails amongst peoples and that genuine peace is that which serves as a foundation for economic cooperation. As we move closer to the Amman summit, scheduled to be held towards the end of October 1995, we reiterate that belief and call for real progress on the different tracks of the peace process in order to provide the necessary conditions for promoting cooperation in the region.

In this connection, Egypt believes that it is the issues of arms control and regional security that will determine the form and extent of cooperation amongst the countries of the region in the future. Egypt views security, as the principal mainstay of the edifice of peace in the Middle East, and believes that it should rest squarely on the firm foundation of equal rights and obligations for all parties in the region with regard to disarmament, so that equal security may be achieved at the minimum level of armament and guaranteed through the defining of common rights and interests and not through the acquisition of weapons of mass destruction.

Proceeding from this, we call for initiating concrete steps towards:

- Israel's accession to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and subjecting its nuclear facilities to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) international regime of safeguards and inspection.

- Engaging in discussion aimed at establishing a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East.

- Reviewing the relevant international agreements on disarmament, by the countries of the region, with a view to harmonizing their positions and commitments regarding those agreements.

I seize this opportunity to call upon the permanent Members of the Security Council which sponsored the resolution relating to the Middle East in the Review and Extension Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons to take concrete steps that would ensure the accession to the Treaty by all States of the region and to initiate the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East in accordance with the Egyptian initiative which has enjoyed the consensus of all the parties concerned for more than 15 years now.

Speaking of the Middle East, I shall now address the situation in the countries neighbouring Egypt. I shall begin by extending a brotherly greeting to the brotherly people of Sudan and say that only what is right and true will prove to be right and true in the end and that things will inescapably revert to normal in a Sudan that will be free from the politics of terrorism under the guise of religion. The historical ties of friendship that took root over the ages between our two peoples will continue to flow as strongly as the flow of the river Nile through our two countries. Egypt, which does not change its position on such matters, clearly reaffirms its support for the unity and territorial integrity of Sudan within its political borders.

On the western borders of Egypt, we can state that Libya now has the firm political will to put an end to the Lockerbie crisis by accepting the trial of the accused and by working for practical solutions within the framework of implementing the relevant Security Council resolutions. In the interests of justice and fairness to the families of the victims, any objective view of the problem would underscore the importance of respecting international legality by accelerating the process of trying those accused of perpetrating an international crime.

On the other hand, the stability of the Middle East requires the achievement of the security and stability of the Gulf. In Iraq, the suffering of the Iraqi people continues as that people lives under very cruel conditions. Even the territorial integrity of Iraq is being threatened continuously, a matter which we shall never accept or acquiesce in. We do look forward to the day in the near future when the suffering of the Iraqi people will come to an end and Iraq will resume exercising its rights and obligations as a responsible member of the Arab family and the international community.

Now that the Iraqi Government has recognized the sovereignty of Kuwait and its international borders in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions, we hope that resolving the problem of the prisoners of war and the detainees, side by side with the fact that it has complied with the provisions of Security Council resolutions on weapons of mass destruction will be the first major step towards easing the sanctions imposed on Iraq as stipulated in resolution 687 (1991). We also hope that this will lead to practical steps by the Council towards the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East in implementation of paragraph 14 of the said resolution, the only paragraph of the resolution which has remained unimplemented.

Across the gulf, we invite Iran, with which the Arab world entertains well-known links and well-known differences at the same time, to seek to settle the problem of the Arab islands in the Gulf, namely: Abu Musa and Greater and Lesser Tunb Islands and to respect the sovereignty of the United Arab Emirates. This will no doubt serve the interests of stability in that part of the Middle East and work in favour of normal Arab-Iranian relations.

Allow me to state candidly that we are finding it increasingly difficult to promote moral support for the United Nations because of a general feeling of frustration *vis-à-vis* what is going on in the world. Such frustration was inevitable in view of the destruction, killings and war crimes in Bosnia and Herzegovina against the backdrop of an unjustified dereliction of duty on the part of the international community *vis-à-vis* those atrocities. This, very naturally, has led to a great deal of questioning about the double standards which have come to be the main characteristic of the so-called new international order and have deprived that order of credibility even before it took concrete shape.

Allowing the United Nations-declared "safe areas" to fall has shaken the international order and raised doubts regarding the effectiveness of the peace-keeping system. The continuing deterioration of the situation in Bosnia has led the Islamic countries to take a decision to reject the applicability of the arms embargo on Bosnia since it contradicts the right to legitimate self-defence enshrined in the United Nations Charter, when necessary.

However, we welcome the current international peace efforts aimed at halting the bloody conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina, provided that such efforts and policies do not lead to Bosnia's partitioning or fragmentation, and provided that the peace plans will prove to be honest in their formulations and objectives. We also welcome the parties' success in reaching a declaration of principles on a regional settlement and hope that the ongoing negotiations will lead to a comprehensive, just and viable solution which would respect legality and help bring stability to the region.

Proceeding from our constant support for the rights of the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina and their just cause, we accept what their Government deems acceptable, especially that, as the whole world has seen, President Alija Izetbegovic has shown admirable flexibility and has responded positively to international legality throughout all the stages of the crisis. At the

same time, we underline the need for the negotiation process not to ignore the fundamental principles established by the United Nations in dealing with this problem. In particular, we underscore here, the following principles:

First: Any attempt to treat the aggressor on the same footing as the victim of aggression is unacceptable. Pressure should not be brought to bear on the weaker party under the pretext of searching for applicable solutions.

Second: The territorial map of Bosnia and Herzegovina should not be redrawn in a manner that would consecrate the results of aggression, expansionism and ethnic cleansing.

Third: Recognizing an entity for the Bosnian Serbs inside the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina requires the international community to deal very carefully indeed with the lack of political, military and institutional balance between the parties. It also requires international guarantees to ensure the implementation of any eventual settlement. This highlights the importance of arming the government of Bosnia Herzegovina with the necessary defensive means that would enable it to exercise its legitimate right to self-defence in consonance with the Charter, so that this Member State of the United Nations may not continue to be exposed to destruction or fragmentation should the Serbs renege on the commitment to respect Bosnia's territorial integrity.

Fourth: The measures of collective security measures should be applied, if necessary, to support the negotiation process until the plan for a regional settlement is put into effect.

Fifth: War criminals must be punished for the crimes they have perpetrated. Short of this, it will be farcical to talk of upholding human rights in any part of the world and expect people to take such talk seriously.

As we speak of the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, I must commend the efforts of the United Nations Protection Force and salute, in particular, the sons of my country, the Egyptian officers and soldiers who are bravely carrying out their duties under very difficult conditions. I should like also, to stress in this connection the need for the United Nations Forces should continue to carry out their mandate until the Bosnian Government army becomes capable of shouldering its tasks in defence of Bosnia's territorial integrity, independence and sovereignty.

The fact that the Economic and Social Council allocated the high-level segment of its last substantive session to discussing the problems of development in Africa is proof of the United Nations awareness of the serious challenges facing economic and social development in the continent. It is essential to intensify international efforts aimed at restructuring the economies of African countries, diversifying their exports and strengthening regional integration amongst the countries of Africa, particularly since the Abuja agreement which established the African Economic Community has entered into force.

Egypt's awareness of the seriousness and urgency of these challenges and of the need to face up to them led it to call for a special extraordinary ministerial session of the Organization of African Unity (OAU). The meeting took place in March 1995 and adopted the Cairo Plan of Action for economic and social development in Africa.

Even a cursory look at the overall situation in Africa would reveal that the urgent need for a climate of peace and stability, makes it necessary for the United Nations to increase its contribution towards the creation of such a climate, in coordination and cooperation with the Organization of African Unity. This highlights the importance of the efforts deployed by the African countries towards supporting and developing the OAU's mechanism for the prevention, management and resolution of disputes in Africa. Such efforts require the financial and technical support from both the United Nations and the international community.

As I speak, tension persists in many parts of Africa. In particular, Rwanda and Burundi, Egypt's sisterly partners in great resource, the Nile, continue to be in the grip of a situation that endangers the stability and security of a large area of Africa. This calls for solutions that would allow everyone to live in a society based on justice and equality. Egypt believes that the proposed regional conference for the countries of the Great Lakes region must elaborate regional policies aimed at finding solutions to the problems of the countries of the region from an overall perspective that would take into account the plight of refugees, ethnic conflicts and other matters. Although the primary responsibility for finding solutions to such problem rests with the countries of the region, which must manifest a spirit of tolerance and moderation if they are to achieve national reconciliation and social peace, the United Nations is called upon to support all the efforts deployed in that direction, in line with the Secretary-General's oft-repeated pledge that the United

Nations shall pay attention on an equal footing to the problems of all regions of the world.

In Somalia, Egypt hopes that all parties will adhere to African values and listen to the voice of reason in order for them to extricate the Somali people from its cruel plight.

Such a review of the hotbeds of tension and crises in Africa should not detract from the importance of the positive developments that have taken place in Africa over the past two years, particularly in Mozambique, Angola and more recently in Liberia. These have been truly important achievements which were made possible by good intentions and through the effective role played by the United Nations and the OAU. We do hope that all parties, especially in Angola and Liberia, will remain committed to the agreements to restore peace and normal life in these two sister countries.

I turn now to the world economy. In this respect, allow me to state that, although the responsibility for achieving development and improving economic performance falls mainly on the shoulders of the States concerned, we believe that the solidarity of the international community — through the establishment of a propitious economic environment and extending a helping hand — is a very important element in the area of development.

The growing marginalization of the role of the developing countries in an increasingly interdependent world could adversely affect stability. We heartily welcome the ideas which the Secretary-General set out in his Agenda for Development and hope that the General Assembly's deliberations on the Agenda will contribute to correcting the current serious imbalances.

There is a need, as a matter of priority that should be addressed with courage and creativity, to reformulate policies and solutions to the problem of the external debt of the developing countries that would help create a climate of equal opportunity amongst peoples and nations and make use of the latent potential of many parts of the world in paving the way towards balanced and comprehensive development at the threshold of the twenty-first century.

The liberalization of international trade is an essential ingredient of economic growth. However, this liberalization requires rationalization in the light of the present structural imbalances and the huge and widening gap between the developing and the developed countries. Moreover, the selective policies pursued by some developed countries in liberalizing their trade and the disguised protectionist policies which are put in place behind a façade of environmental, human rights or other considerations, contradict the spirit and the call for liberalizing international trade and would lead to the worsening and entrenchment of the present imbalances.

We welcome the World Trade Organization as it begins its work. We hope that rectifying those imbalances will be one of its most important concerns in the future. We should also like to stress the need for the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development to continue to perform its role as the international negotiating forum that is qualified to build consensus on issues relating to free trade and development and also as the very valuable source of technical assistance and information on world trade for the developing countries.

Changes on the international economic arena make it necessary to embark on a broad review of the role, the capabilities and the structures of international financing institutions with a view to enabling those institutions to respond to those changes and to the requirements of comprehensive and sustainable development in a manner that would reflect the spirit of democracy and reform.

There is no doubt that the phenomenon of terrorism has become cause for deep concern to many peoples who have become fed up with criminal acts that aim at terrorizing whole societies and with the export of terrorism by countries that, having allowed themselves to become safe havens for extremism and bases for assassins and criminals, have hosted terrorists and provided them with refuge, protection and assistance.

In this connection, I should like to point out that events have shown that terrorism is not limited to any specific geographical area or to any culture or religion. Therefore, it is not wise for some to try to pretend that Islam is synonymous with extremism. Also, it would be absolutely unfair to ignore the fundamental difference between Islam, a religion of tolerance that upholds human values, and the terrorism practised by certain fundamentalist, so-called religious groups that are deviants from Islam. It is therefore incumbent upon us to implement the Declaration on Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism, which we adopted last year. Let us close the door in the face of those whose hands are smeared with the blood of innocent victims and develop a strict legal regime to prosecute terrorists and try them for the heinous crimes they perpetrate to the detriment of international stability and security.

In conclusion, I should like to pay tribute to the outstanding role and sincere efforts of the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros-Ghali, to enhance and revitalize the United Nations so that it may cope with the realities of our era and the expectations of our peoples for peace, security, development, justice and equality. Egypt is proud to see one of its prominent sons at the helm of the United Nations, at this important juncture of its history and during this critical era of the history of mankind.

Now that we are celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, we find ourselves still far from achieving the noble goals and objectives enshrined in its Charter. On the threshold of a new century and a new millennium, we have to work together to support the United Nations and strengthen its capabilities. This is an absolute necessity if we are to look to the future with confidence and hope for a better life for everyone.

The Acting President: I now call on the Secretary of the General People's Committee of the People's Bureau for Foreign Liaison and International Cooperation of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, His Excellency Mr. Omar Mustafa Muntasser.

Mr. Muntasser (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*interpretation from Arabic*): It is a pleasure for me to congratulate you on your election to the presidency of the fiftieth session of the General Assembly. Your unanimous election to this lofty post is a tribute paid by the international community to your country and to you personally. It also bespeaks recognition of your abilities and skills. To your predecessor, Mr. Amara Essy, the president of the forty-ninth session, who demonstrated great dedication and a high level of efficiency, we should like to extend our deep appreciation for his efforts and skill.

On this occasion, I cannot fail to express my delegation's appreciation to the Secretary-General of our Organization, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, for his tireless efforts to enhance the United Nations and increase its effectiveness. Through his "Supplement to 'An Agenda for Peace'", he has demonstrated once again high initiative in seeking to enable the United Nations to rise to the challenges of today's highly complex world.

This session of the General Assembly convenes on an important occasion. In a few days, celebrations will commence to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations with the aim of sparing humanity the repetition of the suffering it had endured as a result of two world wars. This historical occasion, which marks the end of the post-war era with all its ramifications, affords us an opportunity to take stock, while we celebrate, of the Organization's progress over the past five decades, to evaluate its performance, and to seek the ways and means whereby it could overcome the negatives that in the past prevented it from achieving its goals. In so doing, we should put forward plans and programmes of action that would revitalize the United Nations and enable it to face up to the challenges of the future and to establish a better world that would be consonant with principles of the Charter and the common values and aspirations of all nations.

Last year, the world witnessed certain encouraging developments. The efforts deployed to promote international cooperation in the interests of economic and social development, to reduce environmental degradation and to combat the phenomena of poverty, terrorism and drugs continued apace. The dispute in Mozambique was settled by peaceful means and peace in Central America has been consolidated. All these developments and tendencies give cause for hope. However, we should not allow ourselves to be overly elated. Civil wars and regional conflicts continue to wreak havoc and to undermine security and stability in many parts of the world. In the post-cold-war world there are many other challenges, which I shall address presently. Before I do so, however, I seek your indulgence in allowing me to turn to another question that is not far-removed from the present international situation and the way small countries have come to be treated especially when they adopt independent policies and positions. I refer here to the dispute between my country and France, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America over the Pan Am flight 103 incident, and the crash of the French UTA aircraft. This dispute would not have continued for such a long time had the right approach been adopted and had there been any acceptance of the call for dialogue and negotiation in seeking to settle the dispute.

As you know, over several years, and in complete secrecy, certain bodies that are claimed to be independent investigated the two incidents. Suddenly and without the presentation of any evidence, Britain and the United States of America surprised the world by declaring that the Pan Am flight 103 incident was the work of two Libyans nationals. At the same time, France declared that circumstantial evidence pointed at the involvement of several Libyans in the attack against UTA flight 772. Although those who made the allegations did not corroborate them by any document, testimony or fact, the

Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, upon being notified of the allegations, announced that it was ready to cooperate in uncovering the facts surrounding the two incidents. I do not see any need to repeat the measures we have taken in this regard, since I have enumerated them at the past two sessions of this Assembly. Moreover, we have informed all Member States of our positions and initiatives, in this respect, in official documents that have been circulated to them. However, I should like to remind, briefly, that my country has condemned terrorism in all its forms, and has declared its commitment to the implementation of any action decided upon by the international community to combat terrorism. My country has also cooperated with the Government of the United Kingdom. British officials have themselves voiced satisfaction with Libya's response. Contacts have been initiated and are continuing with the French authorities with a view to determining the circumstances of the crash of the French aircraft. My country has spared no effort in searching for a feasible course of action with regard to the two individuals who have been suspected of having something to do with the incident of the American plane. Libyan judicial authorities started to investigate this case but had to suspend the investigation because of the refusal of both the United States and British authorities to submit any documents or papers in their possession. Despite the fact that the issue of the trial of the two suspects is determined by the 1971 Montreal Convention, which gives Libya the right to try them, the refusal by Britain and the United States to abide by this Convention, to which they are both parties, prompted Libya to seek other solutions to the issue of the trial. In this respect, Libya has submitted several proposals, including one that calls for resorting to the International Court of Justice, or trying the two suspects before a court whose venue should be agreed upon by the parties concerned.

Although the United States and British Governments have both announced that their allegations have been built on specific facts and reliable information, the facts that have come to light over the past three years refute such assertions. In addition to the statement by the Palestinian national, Yusuf Sha'aban, before a Lebanese court, there are the statements of the manager of a Swiss electronics company which undermine the most important basis for accusing the two Libyan nationals. The information published in *Tracking the Octopus*, a recent work of investigative journalism, points an accusing finger at other quarters. Despite all this, Libya continued to cooperate in seeking to reveal all the facts surrounding the Pan Am flight 103 incident. Proceeding from this, Libya accepted the proposal of the League of Arab States, which calls for trying the two suspected individuals by Scottish judges, under Scottish law, at the seat of the International Court of Justice at the Hague.

The many secrets and mysterious dimensions of the Lockerbie incident which have been uncovered have now been brought into sharp focus by, *inter alia*, the television documentary "The Maltese Double-Cross", William Chasey's book *The Lockerbie Cover-Up* and Geoff Simmons' book "Libya: The Struggle for Survival". In addition, several articles on this question have appeared in various newspapers, including the article published by *The Guardian* of London on 29 June 1995. All these documentary revelations by the media refute the accusations levelled at the two Libyans, and provide evidence that the incident was planned by professional agencies to cover up certain suspect activities. Despite all this, Libya, which, from the very beginning, declared that it is most interested in unearthing the truth regarding this incident, has not retreated from its declared position, namely that it has no objection whatsoever to the trial of its two suspected nationals before a court of law.

Libya's overriding concern in all this is to ensure that its two nationals get a just, fair and neutral trial, that would be free from any emotional or media influences and which would be conducted in accordance with the rules of international law which Libya has always upheld and adhered to. The International Court of Justice can testify to our adherence to and respect for international law, as has been proven in three cases, the latest being the judgment by the Court in relation to the territorial dispute between the Jamahiriya and Chad. Although the judgment was against our position, Libya, out of respect for international law, accepted the ruling of the Court and implemented it in a constructive manner. This confirms Libya's respect for international legality, to which one of the big Powers pays lip service all the time, but does not apply. It even refuses to resort to the International Court of Justice because this big Power believes in the law of force not the force of law.

It is evident that the Governments of the United States and Britain are not keen on revealing the truth about the perpetrators of the tragic Lockerbie incident. It has become abundantly clear that involving Libya in this incident was a premeditated act that aimed at achieving certain objectives. Otherwise, why should the two Governments object to the trial of the two suspected individuals before the judiciary of a third country or before the International Court of Justice when this has

been acceptable to the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and has been supported by most members of the international community, as represented by their regional organizations: the League of Arab States, the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the Organization of African Unity, and the Non-Aligned Movement? What prevents the two Governments from accepting the path of dialogue and negotiation as stipulated by the Charter of the United Nations? Why is the Security Council being prevented from responding to repeated calls and appeals by over two thirds of the membership of the United Nations on whose behalf the Security Council is supposed to act? And why the double standards when it comes to dealing with issues of international legality? Furthermore, how can a certain major Power explain the fact that while it claims to be keen on preserving this legality, its record shows that it has the least regard for the will of the international community, a fact that is attested to by that major Power's continued support of a certain State and protection of that State from punishment for its refusal to implement international resolutions which now total 143, including dozens that have been adopted by the Security Council?

The rejection by the two Governments, of the United States and Britain, of all Libyan proposals and of all regional initiatives proves that they want this crisis to continue for as long as possible. Evidence of this can be found in the fact that the more Libya's positions are welcomed and the more widespread becomes the call for lifting the sanctions imposed on the Libyan people, the more the two Governments hasten to oppose such positions under the false pretext of Libya's non-response to the resolutions of the Council, thus keeping the Libyan people hostage to unjustified sanctions. As if these countries are not content with the difficulties and pains suffered by the Libyan people at the hands of colonialists and fascists — people who fought on its territory, a war that killed and displaced hundreds of thousands of its people, and planted in their farms and under their homes millions of mines that still explode and injure innocent Libyans. These mines also hinder Libya's efforts to combat desertification, protect the environment, and expand economic and social development. It even seems that these countries are not content with the suffering of the Libyan people so far, including the acts of terrorism to which the Libyan people have been subjected such as the deliberate downing of a Libyan civilian plane by Israeli military aircraft in 1973, which killed all its 108 passengers. Also, in 1986, hundreds of American fighters bombed Libyan cities while their residents were asleep. This aggression claimed the lives of many people and resulted in heavy material damage. Later, it was proved that the pretext used by the United States of America for this act of aggression was false and baseless. The deep desire to punish the Libyan people also became clear when these countries insisted on depriving its civilian aircraft of necessary spare parts. In 1992, this led to the crash of one of those aircraft and the death of all its 157 passengers.

All this begs the question: is it a desire to discover the truth, or is it a desire, a thirst to wreak revenge on Libya because of the defeat of the United States fleet in 1805? So, where is the truth? Is it the thirst for revenge, a vendetta waged by a major Power against a small country, a vendetta that goes back 150 years?

The Libyan Arab Jamahiriya has sought a speedy and just solution to the dispute with France, Britain and the United States of America. All Libya asked was that the problem should be settled in accordance with the principles of the United Nations and the rules of international law. For this purpose, we have knocked on many doors, but our efforts, and those of others, to solve the dispute and to lift the sanctions have faced continued rejection. Furthermore, there are hints that other measures may be adopted to tighten the sanctions against us under the pretext that Libya has not responded to the demands of the Security Council. This is not true. It merely represents manipulation and trickery with regard to the interpretation of those resolutions.

Now that I have reviewed this crisis for the fourth time before the General Assembly and in order to avoid any further ramifications, we believe it is now incumbent upon this august assembly to intervene and to act in accordance with the powers entrusted to it by the Charter in order to get the three countries to respond to the repeated calls for an urgent and peaceful solution to this problem, in accordance with Chapter VI of the Charter of the United Nations. This assembly should also urge the Security Council to reconsider its resolutions in order to lift the sanctions. Resorting to sanctions is not the proper way to solve differences between States, especially when such sanctions are unjustifiably imposed, as is the case with the sanctions imposed against the Libyan people. These sanctions have led to the freezing of Libya's assets, and prevented it from getting spare parts, including the parts needed for power plants and desalination machines. This in turn has hampered the Libyan people's efforts with regard to development, and paralysed the activities of most economic sectors. The more serious aspect of the effects of these sanctions is the enormity of the material and human losses which I need not review here in detail, since we have detailed them in

several official documents, the latest of which is United Nations document S/1995/474 dated 12 June 1995. Suffice it to mention here that the number of people injured in road accidents has reached 12,700 of whom 1,870 have died of their injuries while others continue to suffer from permanent injuries. Material damage has exceeded ten billion dollars. Moreover, the adverse effects of the sanctions have not been limited to the Libyan people. They have affected neighbouring countries and all the peoples of the region. Here, I must repeat that the longer these sanctions continue, the more people will die and the greater the suffering and the damage. There is no reason whatsoever for remaining silent on the subject of injustice and the continuation of this wrong. For the Assembly's information a road accident which took place two days ago on the road from Tripoli to Tunis resulted in the death of three members of a Maltese delegation.

As I have previously stated, the international political situation has witnessed new positive developments which my country welcomes. However, we must recognize that numerous challenges still face peace in the world and that, consequently, the international community is called upon to mobilize all its capabilities in facing up to those challenges.

The continued deterioration of the situation in Somalia and the intensification of tensions in that country require more regional efforts to persuade Somali leaders to enter into additional political commitments and to work for the restoration of peace and permanent stability to their country. Seeking to make the world more secure and more stable requires supporting national reconciliation efforts in Afghanistan, promoting a satisfactory solution to the problem of Cyprus, solving the problems in Rwanda and Burundi and settling the disputes in Angola and Liberia. It also requires putting an end to the repeated setbacks to peace efforts in the Balkans, as well as sparing the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and other peoples of the former Yugoslavia, more pain and suffering.

In order to establish permanent stability in the Gulf region, the unity and territorial integrity of Iraq must be respected, and all interference in its internal affairs must cease. Furthermore, the sanctions from which the Iraqi people have been suffering should be lifted.

In the context of any effort to consolidate world peace, serious action must be taken to resolve the problems of the Middle East. It is unacceptable that the Palestinian people should continue to be displaced from their land, while those who stay on that land are brutally treated. The overwhelming majority of the international community, which has continued to support the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people over the past four decades, should take firm action to put an end to the Israeli practices against the Palestinians and the other inhabitants of the occupied Arab territories in the Golan and southern Lebanon. The Israelis must be deterred, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, from their continued defiance of the will of the international community. The incontrovertible truth is that occupation and expansion are the real aim of the Israelis. Their former and present positions and practices indicate that they do not want a just and comprehensive peace. Their joining the so-called peace process is a mere smoke-screen, a mask they hide behind in order to perpetrate further occupation and enhance their superiority.

A just, comprehensive and lasting solution to the problems of the Middle East cannot be achieved by ceding the administration of local affairs in Gaza and Jericho, but rather by the liberation of all occupied Arab territories and the full enforcement of all the rights of the Palestinian people — first and foremost being their return to their homeland, self-determination, and the establishment of their own independent state in Palestine, with Al-Quds as its capital, a state where Arabs and Jews alike would live together. There is no alternative to this solution. The solutions being put forward these days, regardless of all the talk about how desirable their results would be, will not lead to the results aspired to by the Palestinians, simply because those solutions are unrealistic and ignore the facts of history.

The continued existence of nuclear weapons and the increased stockpiling of these and other weapons of mass destruction are among the principal concerns of the international community. When the first review Conference of the States parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) was held in the first half of this year, it was hoped that that Conference would lead to satisfactory results. However, what actually happened was that certain nuclear Powers brought to bear unprecedented pressures that made it possible for the NPT to be extended indefinitely. My country declared its opposition to this extension, and we remain convinced that extending the Treaty in that manner would never serve the objective of nuclear-weapon disarmament.

The NPT has not achieved universality, and its many shortcomings have not been properly addressed. In our view, ridding the world of nuclear terror will not be achieved through gains obtained by manoeuvres and unconventional measures, but rather through serious

measures, which must be taken by the nuclear States. In this context, the procurement of nuclear materials must be ended, and nuclear States must commit themselves to a deadline for the complete elimination of all nuclear weapons. These States should put an end to nuclear tests and conclude, at the earliest possible time, a comprehensive test-ban treaty. Furthermore, the nuclear States should demonstrate the political will required to conclude an effective treaty guaranteeing the security and safety of non-nuclear States.

Another situation that requires speedy corrective action involves the unjustified restriction on the transfer to non-nuclear States of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes. Above all, measures should be taken to guarantee the universality of the NPT. My country attaches the greatest importance to this issue, because the region to which we belong suffers from a security imbalance, owing to the Israelis' tremendous nuclear capability — they have more than 200 nuclear warheads and nuclear facilities that are not subjected to international inspection. This represents a threat to the security and safety of the peoples of the region. No one should keep silent about a situation of this kind or accept the extension of the NPT as long as such a situation continues.

If the indefinite extension of the NPT is to be with the complete support of all, international action must be taken to meet all these widely expressed requirements and to guarantee accession by all to the Treaty, including, in particular, the Israelis, who must agree to subject their nuclear facilities to the safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency, as well as fixing a timetable for the dismantling and destruction of their nuclear stockpiles.

In reviewing the international economic situation, it becomes clear that the economic development of most developing countries, especially in Africa, is still sluggish and subject to fluctuations and imbalances. The present indicators give the impression that this situation is likely to deteriorate further unless effective measures are taken to reverse it. The fact is that the economic difficulties of the developing countries are not the result of a lack of legislation or plans. For example, Africa has adopted plans and strategies to promote development and has concluded a treaty that aims at economic integration. However, the problem lies in the unjust criteria still prevalent in international economic relations. These require realistic and responsible solutions without the imposition of politically motivated conditions.

The conferences that have been held over the past few years have created new opportunities to improve the prevailing economic and social situation. We hope that the consensus agreements emanating from those conferences will generate the necessary political will for the implementation of the resolutions taken by those and other international forums, including the commitments announced during the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. What is more urgent is the need to take immediate action to address the external causes of economic deterioration in developing countries, namely the increasing tendency towards protectionism, declining terms of trade, shrinking official development assistance and restrictions on the transfer of technology.

In addition, it is necessary to deal with unjust practices in international economic relations such as coercive economic measures, including boycotts, the freezing of assets, the confiscation of property and the prohibition of the export of spare parts, which has been applied by certain developed countries against a number of developing countries, including my own. Such measures not only impede development and run counter to the Charter of the United Nations, to the resolutions of the General Assembly and to the orientation towards the establishment of a system of international economic relations based on justice and fairness, but also constitute a violation of the norms of international law. The Western countries that manufacture the needed spare parts, medical supplies and water-desalination and power-generating equipment, by taking such coercive measures, violate their commitments under free-trade agreements. This should serve as a warning to whoever deals with those countries, because there is no guarantee that such measures will not be applied to them as well.

Last year and the year before, wide-ranging discussions were held on the restructuring of the United Nations. These discussions have shown that there is a need to review and change the procedures and methods of work of the Security Council so that it may be able to seriously and fairly address questions that touch on international peace and security. During the meetings of the Working Group established by the General Assembly to look into the question of equitable representation in and increase in the membership of the Security Council, as well as into other related matters, my country declared its support of the call for enhancing the powers of the General Assembly, including giving it the right to deal with questions of peace and security in the world, in conformity with the provisions of the Charter. My country reiterates its conviction that reforming the

Security Council and increasing its membership should be part and parcel of an integrate process of reform that must be guided by the principles of the sovereign equality of States, equitable geographical distribution and the need to democratize the procedures and methods applied in the Security Council, including the process of decision-making.

Libya has been among the first to call for the elimination of all the obstacles that hamper the work of the Security Council, particularly, the veto power. Today my country takes satisfaction in the fact that this call, which Libya made 20 years ago, now has the support of many countries. This shows that those countries have now become convinced that there is no longer any justification for the power of the veto and that its continued existence breaches one of the principles of the United Nations, namely, the equality of States. It is that veto power which impedes all efforts aimed at the democratization of the membership and functions of United Nations bodies.

Since becoming a Member of the United Nations, my country has played an active role in and contributed to many achievements of which the Organization can be proud. My country will also contribute to whatever the Organization seeks to achieve in the future. Based on this, we have actively participated in the international Conferences recently organized by the United Nations on population, social development, human rights, and women. This we did in the same spirit that inspires our country's international activities at other levels. That is why Libya has participated in all efforts aimed at strengthening the Arab Maghreb Union. We are proud to see that this Union has advanced steadily and has taken serious initiatives to serve the peoples of the Union and to protect their gains. Libya works with the same determination to adopt effective measures to enhance cooperation and strengthen confidence and security in the Mediterranean region in order to remove the causes of tensions there. This includes our efforts to close foreign military bases in the Mediterranean region and to secure the withdrawal of military fleets from its waters. Proceeding from its positions of principle, Libya has been at the forefront of the defenders of the aspirations of peoples, whether in the field of decolonization, the protection and maintenance of human rights, or the enhancement of the role principles of justice and fairness should play in international relations.

Libya has also sought to solve a number of regional disputes by peaceful means. In this spirit, it has undertaken several mediation missions including, for example, assistance in solving the problems in the southern Philippines and helping to arrest the deterioration of the dispute between Sudan and Uganda, as well as those between Nigeria and Cameroon and Greece and Turkey. Libya has also contributed to efforts aimed at halting the escalation of the dispute between India and Pakistan, and has helped in containing events in north Niger and Mali.

In this current session in particular, Libya takes pride in the fact that these positions have had wide-ranging effects that were reflected in the trust placed in my country by Arab States and the group of African States which unanimously nominated Libya to the membership of the Security Council for the coming two years. While expressing its high appreciation of this Arab and African stand, Libya would like to thank, in advance, all the countries that will support our candidature for that seat. We should also like to confirm to everybody that Libya will support all efforts aimed at the realization of the purposes of the United Nations and, in cooperation with members of the Security Council and other members of the Organization, will work to enhance the role of the United Nations in the maintenance of international peace and security, and in closing ranks with other countries in facing up to the dangers that threaten peace and security in the world.

At the beginning of this statement, I said that this session of the General Assembly had a special significance. This is due to the fact that we believe that the historical occasion under the aura of which this session convenes, namely, the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, will afford us all an opportunity that should be seized — an opportunity to realize peace, security and prosperity for humanity.

In our view, the starting point in this direction lies in hard work to establish the structure of a new international order. Such an order, however, should not be built according to the wishes of the few who seek to impose their hegemony on others in deciding the fate of the world, and to dictate their own methods of dealing with international relations.

The new order that would satisfy us all should be built on the common aspirations of all. It should be an order that guarantees full equality to all countries; an order that must respect the free political, economic and social choices of all peoples. The new order should protect and enhance human rights. It should create conditions conducive to the settlement of disputes and conflicts and to the resolution of differences among States by peaceful means. It should be an order which provides security and stability, and should make it possible for all

nations to aspire after development and to be optimistic about the future. This new order should embody the noble concepts and ideals enshrined in the Charter; namely, the need to unite our strength to save humanity from the scourge of war, to realize justice, to respect the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law, and to promote better standards of life in greater freedom.

The Acting President: I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Qatar, His Excellency Sheikh Hamad Bin Jassem Bin Jabr Al Thani.

Sheikh Al Thani (Qatar) *(interpretation from Arabic):* At the outset, it gives me great pleasure to congratulate His Excellency Mr. Diogo Freitas do Amaral on his election to the presidency of this historic fiftieth session of the General Assembly. His election reflects the esteem in which Member States hold his country, the friendly country of Portugal, and the confidence that his diplomatic talents will make possible the successful culmination of the work of this important session.

I should also like to express my delegation's esteem for his predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Amara Essy, for the competent way in which he conducted the work of the forty-ninth session.

It is also my pleasure to express Qatar's full confidence in and esteem for the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali. In fact, he is doing a great deal to serve this international Organization, and has been extremely assiduous in implementing its noble principles and strengthening its role in the maintenance of international peace and security.

I should like to congratulate the Member States that have recently joined the Organization. We hope that those States will be active participants in and will contribute constructively to the activities of the United Nations and to the defence of its principles.

This fiftieth session is being held at a historic and complex turning point in history, where extreme complexity characterizes the concepts relating to international relations. These concepts, because of their diversity and the erratic course they follow, create a number of serious difficulties and obstacles that face the emergence of the desired international order. All this has taken concrete form in the resurgence of inter-ethnic and inter-racial extremist conflicts that threaten the very foundations of international society, which should continue to be based on tolerance and the principles and values of the United Nations. Hence the need to redouble our efforts to put an end to such conflicts and to contain their consequences and the threats they pose to the international community. While expressing our appreciation for the efforts that have been made by this Organization to cope with the deplorable events that have taken place in Somalia, Rwanda, Burundi and Bosnia and Herzegovina, we are mindful of the difficulties that obstruct such efforts and make it difficult for the Organization to find the desired solutions to those problems.

Mr. Pibulsonggram (Thailand), Vice-President, took the Chair.

On top of all this, it is patently clear that the Security Council, which has adopted pertinent resolutions to solve these problems, has come face to face with obstacles that hampered the achievement of the desired solutions. The continued presence of such obstacles has affected the credibility and standing of the United Nations. In the post-cold-war period, the United Nations has been put to the test in the areas of peace-keeping and the maintenance of international peace and security. Hence the urgent need during this fiftieth anniversary to make every effort to fundamentally reform the United Nations to enhance its effectiveness and its standing. I think we all aspire to the goal of reforming the United Nations, and my country attaches particular importance to it; it would strengthen the effectiveness of the international Organization and enhance its image.

We know that the obstacles facing the Security Council have been the reason behind the demand for reforming that principal organ with the Charter responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. A high priority is given to this reform of the Security Council which tops the list of the desired reforms of the United Nations. As for the State of Qatar, it attaches particular importance to efforts to reform the Council and to increase its membership proportionately with the increased membership of the United Nations itself. We must also bear in mind the need to increase the number of permanent seats to ensure balanced representation. The great challenge the international community faces as it strives to reform the Security Council is to achieve a balanced membership and to ensure that the changes will make for increased effectiveness. We should also speed up reform of the working methods and procedures of the Security Council. We must review the right of veto and rein in its use as that right has frequently been used against the interests of

the international community and in favour of individual States.

Proceeding from its conviction that international peace can be achieved only through disarmament and restraining the arms race, particularly with respect to weapons of mass destruction and that halting the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is one of the most important foundations of international peace and security, the State of Qatar welcomed the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction, and supported the extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), even if it considers that the indefinite extension of the Treaty will never achieve the desired result unless all States accede to it. We therefore hope that all the States which have not yet acceded to the Treaty will do so.

Qatar continues to believe that Israel should accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and should place its nuclear installations under the safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) as a prelude to the implementation of the General Assembly's resolution establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. This would contribute to equitable, balanced peace and stability in that vital region of the world.

Since His Highness Sheikh Khalifa Bin Hamad Al-Thani became Emir, he has stressed Qatar's adherence to its regional and international obligations, and has emphasized that Qatar will act through international and regional organizations in strengthening international peace and security. By joining our brethren in the Gulf Cooperation Council, we have set a course towards the achievement of the noble goals that reflect the aspirations of the peoples of the Gulf after peace, stability, cooperation and prosperity.

The security of the Gulf is one of the major concerns of its peoples. Our region has witnessed two major wars, during which our peoples have made great sacrifices that have taken the shape of financial burdens which we continue to shoulder at a time when we move towards development and modernization. We are determined to overcome the negative effects of those two wars and to spare the region any further conflict. Moreover, Qatar is making efforts to establish good relations with all States of the region on the basis of good-neighbourliness, mutual respect, non-interference in the internal affairs of others, respect for international legality, and the settlement of problems by peaceful means through dialogue, mediation or recourse to the International Court of Justice.

Proceeding from this, we support resolution of the dispute between the United Arab Emirates and the Islamic Republic of Iran with respect to the three islands by peaceful means.

With regard to Iraq, our position remains unchanged: Iraq's unity and territorial integrity must be preserved. Iraq must implement all Security Council resolutions. Iraq's recognition of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the State of Kuwait, and of its international boundaries, in accordance with Security Council resolution 833 (1993) is a very important step in the right direction towards full implementation of all Security Council resolutions, a fact that should speed up the mitigation of the suffering of the brotherly Iraqi people who continue to face an acute shortage of essential goods, especially foods and medicine.

Inspired by the guidelines established by His Highness Sheikh Khalifa Bin Hamad Al Thani, Qatar has been participating, to the best of its financial and human abilities, in addressing the major issues of the Gulf region and of our Arab and Islamic nation. Qatar, therefore, fully supports the activities of the Gulf Cooperation Council, which are in the interest of the well-being of all our peoples. It is our hope that security and stability will soon reign in our region, for this is an integral part of the security and stability of the Middle East at large. To that end, Qatar is continuing its good offices and its efforts to improve the situation in the Arab world and to consolidate Arab solidarity, which will make it possible for the nation to pursue its special role in the history of civilization.

It is on the basis of these principles that we have welcomed the Middle East peace process. We hope that it will prove successful and that it will at long last bring a just and lasting peace to the region and lead to Israel's complete withdrawal from all the occupied Arab and Palestinian territories, including the Golan Heights, southern Lebanon and, particularly, Al-Quds Al-Sharif. This will make it possible for the Palestinian people to regain its right to establish a State of its own, on its own soil, with Al-Quds as its capital.

Qatar welcomes the expanded autonomy of the Palestinians under the agreement signed last Thursday at Washington between the Palestinians and the Israelis. We hope this agreement will open the doors that lead to

peace and stability in the region and will prove to be an important step towards full implementation of the Declaration of Principles signed by the two parties in September 1993.

By the same token, Qatar wishes to voice its deep concern at the fact that talks between Syria and Israel are lagging behind. We hope for substantial progress on that track so that the Israeli occupation of the Syrian Arab Golan may come to an end. We hope also that there will be progress on the Lebanese-Israeli track, so that southern Lebanon may be freed from the Israeli presence under which it has been the victim of much aggression and oppression.

It is our hope that a just and lasting peace will be established on the basis of the Madrid formula and the relevant Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 425 (1978) and on the basis of the land-for-peace formula. We therefore call on the General Assembly to reaffirm all prior resolutions on the question of Palestine and the situation in the Middle East, so that the goal of a just, comprehensive peace can be achieved.

My Government follows with great concern developments in Afghanistan, Somalia and Chechnya. We appeal for the intensification of international efforts to bring peace, justice and stability to those areas.

We also reaffirm — as we have frequently done, both officially and in public statements — our solidarity with the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina. We are concerned over the continuing bloodshed, four years after the outbreak of the war. Together with many other States, we have deplored the savage practices of ethnic cleansing pursued by the Serbian forces under the eyes of the entire world. Those practices are totally against the most elementary rules and norms of humanitarian law and the Charter of the United Nations.

We welcome the military action undertaken by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), in cooperation with the forces of the United Nations, to put an end to Serbian aggression. We hope that those measures of deterrence will make it possible for peace to be achieved at long last and that the international community will take a very firm and resolute stand, both through the United Nations and through the major Powers that are actively involved, to guarantee the safety of the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina. By the same token, we hope that the weapons embargo will be lifted, in order for these people to defend themselves, to preserve the independence of their country and to ensure the triumph of the principles of the Charter. The Serbian barbarity they have endured has engulfed even the safe areas.

Qatar also supports the stance of the Contact Group of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, which deems the embargo on weapons to be illegal and supports the fraternal Muslim people of Bosnia and Herzegovina. We are now at a critical stage in the conflict in the former Yugoslavia. The international community must, of necessity, act to restore a just peace in the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina and to ensure that that country may enjoy stability, sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity and get down to the business of economic and social development. We hope that the Serbian war criminals will be duly tried and that this will be a lesson to all such criminals.

Qatar is profoundly convinced that peace and development follow the same path, that development is as necessary for the international community as is peace. It is possible to ensure continuous development only if there is peace, and vice-versa. Since sustainable and long-term development is one of the cornerstones of genuine peace, it is a high priority for the United Nations and the international community to focus on development, particularly in the developing countries.

A commitment to development in all its aspects is, indeed, the very bedrock of the international economic order — the new order that we all look forward to and hope that it will be based essentially on interdependence. The international community has already started to move in that direction, through the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade and the establishment of the World Trade Organization. This will help to strengthen the multilateral trade system, which is based on the liberalization and expansion of international trade.

As confirmation of this, His Highness the Emir of the State of Qatar has extolled the merit, from Qatar's point of view, of particular political groups, saying that, despite the fact that ours is a small country, we are trying to react favourably to the new international situation in order to find our proper place in it. We are also taking action to strengthen the ways and means available to us, for the achievement of that goal.

Our economic objectives are the following: to exploit our own natural wealth; to export our products on the best possible terms; to strengthen our industrial base by consolidating and developing our current industries

and by creating new ones on the basis of our natural resources, particularly petroleum and gas; to strengthen and encourage investment in all areas, making it possible for private capital to be involved in economic development; and to emphasize infrastructure projects, as these are the main requirements for socio-economic development.

All this highlights the reason why we attach such importance to economic and social development as a mainstay of international peace and security. That is why development has become a common goal for the international community. Having taken shape in a number of international conferences, it should be adopted by all the nations of the world. We attach particular importance to the results of the conferences that have been held in recent years in the context of the importance accorded by the international community to this common goal, namely, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, in Rio de Janeiro; the International Conference on Population and Development, in Cairo; the World Summit for Social Development, in Copenhagen; and the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing, to emphasize the role of women in development with due consideration of the cultural differences between peoples and the various noble ideals of the Islamic faith.

It is our hope that the matters that were debated will not be used as a pretext for interference in the internal affairs of other States or as justification for discriminatory treatment and the imposition of conditions on the provision of economic assistance or development aid.

I should like to refer in this context to the tendency to impose, unilaterally or collectively, a carbon tax, for the purpose, it is alleged, of protecting the environment. The truth of the matter is that the tax is a purely economic measure, which will impact negatively on the economies of the petroleum-exporting countries, particularly the Gulf States.

The threats that face mankind at present and will continue to do so in the future are not all political or military. Such threats as the deterioration of the environment on a global scale, poverty, underdevelopment, drugs, epidemics of fatal diseases, terrorism and violations of human rights which are becoming more and more serious day by day, are not of a military or political nature. Regardless, they need to be addressed urgently and global solutions have to be found for them if they are not to become untreatable and threaten all humanity.

In just a few days we shall be celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. This is an extremely important occasion, reflecting as it does a genuine desire on the part of the peoples of the world to preserve the United Nations as a strong and active Organization whose purpose is to achieve noble goals and safeguard the future of mankind. As we celebrate the anniversary, at the threshold of the twenty-first century, it is our hope that we shall build a new United Nations that will lead us in the direction of a new world of genuine peace, security, under an effective international order that would guarantee the well-being of all people and preserve the dignity of man, a world where the strong will not dominate the weak or the rich exploit the poor; a world where tolerance and well-being would not be far-fetched dreams.

If we mobilize the full potential of mankind we shall be able, under the guidance of the United Nations and its agencies, to usher in such a brave new world.

The Acting President: I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Myanmar, His Excellency U Ohn Gyaw.

Mr. Gyaw (Myanmar): It gives me great pleasure to extend warm congratulations, on behalf of the delegation of Myanmar and on my own behalf, to Mr. Diogo Freitas do Amaral on his assumption of the presidency of the General Assembly at its fiftieth session. The diplomatic skills and experience he brings to his high office assure us of a successful session.

Allow me to take this opportunity to express our appreciation to Mr. Amara Essy, Foreign Minister of Côte d'Ivoire, for having so successfully guided the deliberations of the last session.

The United Nations is 50 years old this year. It is both a time for celebration and an opportunity for reflection. The Organization has evolved over time and has served us well for half a century. The significant increase in the membership — from the original 51 to the present 185 — underscores the continuing relevance of the United Nations. However, vast transformations are now taking place, and reforms in the structure and work of the Organization must be instituted to reflect the new realities. We wish to see a more efficient and result-oriented Organization — one that retains mechanisms which have proved effective and adopts innovative measures to ensure cooperation in the post-bloc world.

Security Council reforms constitute one of the most important issues to be addressed. Myanmar stands for a pragmatic approach that will ensure that the Council evolves into a more representative, effective and democratic body. To judge from the work done during the last two sessions of the General Assembly by the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council, it is clear that there is a convergence of views that the Council should be enlarged. The enlargement should however be accompanied by measures to make it more effective. It should ensure equitable geographical representation and at the same time preserve the possibility for smaller States to serve on the Council.

Myanmar fully supports the position of the non-aligned countries which stresses the importance of enhancing the effective and efficient functioning of the Security Council by adopting measures geared towards reforming its working methods and procedures.

Myanmar welcomes the actions already taken to enhance the relationship between the Council and the general membership as well as measures to improve its working methods and procedures. We are particularly pleased to see that the Council has initiated the holding of orientation debates and briefings by the President of the Council for States non-members of the Security Council. We see the need to enhance cooperation between the Security Council and the General Assembly in accordance with Articles 10, 11, 12 and 14 of the Charter. We also share the view that reforms can best be achieved through a combination of means that include General Assembly resolutions, changes in the rules of procedure, and appropriate amendments to the Charter where necessary.

At the same time, the role of the General Assembly — the one forum where all the Member States are represented — should be reviewed to enable it to deal more effectively with outstanding problems and to allow it to focus on the new challenges of our times.

We consider it vital that there be a more dynamic relationship between the main organs of the Organization — the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council.

In recent years the United Nations, despite constraints, has been in the forefront of the international community's efforts to deal with the unresolved problems of the cold-war decades as well as new ones that have surfaced. It has been called upon to meet the burgeoning demand for peace-keeping. In some cases, like Angola, Cambodia, El Salvador and Mozambique, it has scored successes. In some others, like Bosnia and Herzegovina and Somalia, it has come under heavy strain and has proved to be ineffective. The lesson to be learned is that the Security Council should be far more conscious of when and under what mandate to begin peace-keeping operations. Such operations must have clearly defined objectives. More important, agreement among major Powers must carry with it the support of the majority of the Member States if it is to have the desired result.

If the United Nations system is to be revitalized and strengthened, the basic issue of adequate financing, particularly of peace-keeping operations, must be addressed. Whether that happens depends on us. The United Nations can only be as strong or as effective as Member States choose to make it. The limitations of the United Nations should not encourage Member States to take precipitate action. As a Myanmar saying goes:

> "When mice enter the granary, we must catch the mice and not set fire to the granary".

The founders of the United Nations also envisaged it as an international body for the promotion of the economic and social welfare of all peoples. Even though the right to development is recognized as an inalienable human right, the disparity between developed and developing countries continues to widen. Member States should reaffirm their commitment to cooperate in creating an international economic environment conducive to the realization of the right to development. Without development there can be no prospect for lasting peace. In this regard I am pleased to note that in his recommendations on an Agenda for Development the Secretary-General last November stressed that development should be recognized as the foremost and most far-reaching task of our time.

The United Nations was established on the principle of the equality of all its Members. The mandate of the Organization is to advance peace and security, and bring international justice and economic and social development to all peoples. While it deserves to be commended for its vital role in the historic process of decolonization which led to the independence of more than 80 countries, much less can be said for its efforts to create an equitable international economic order.

I am pleased to note that the perceptible improvement in the international climate is generating a

favourable impact on some long-standing issues such as the Middle East peace process. The initial steps taken two years ago towards a durable peace have now been followed by firm strides. Myanmar joins other nations in welcoming the accord signed by Prime Minister Rabin and Chairman Arafat in Washington, D.C. on 28 September 1995. We hope that it will pave the way to a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

Just as the family of nations must work together to ensure international peace and stability, individual States must promote peace within their territories. I am happy to be able to say that in Myanmar peace reigns as never before and that the momentum for positive change continues. The Government has set 12 objectives in the political, economic and social fields and is working steadfastly to achieve them.

A unique feature of Myanmar is that it is a union composed of well over a hundred national races. Unity among the different national races is essential for the preservation of our independence and sovereignty as well as for the economic and social progress of the country. The Government has adopted policies to prevent the disintegration of the Union, ensure the non-disintegration of national solidarity, and ensure the perpetuity of our country's sovereignty. Moreover, with a view to building a peaceful, prosperous and modern nation, my Government has formulated and is pursuing clear objectives in the political, economic and social spheres.

Allow me to focus briefly on some of the main issues on our national agenda.

The first issue of ensuring the stability of the State. National reconsolidation is an indispensable component of my Government's policy to achieve peace and tranquillity. A national convention has been convened to draft a new Constitution which would be in harmony with present-day realities and would reflect the aspirations of the entire nation.

Secondly, in the economic sector guidelines have been formulated to promote all-round development of agriculture, which forms the mainstay of the nation's economy. At the same time, Myanmar has laid out a welcome mat to foreign and domestic investors in order to attract capital and technical know-how.

Thirdly, progress is sought in the social sector in order to buttress political stability and economic progress, which constitute foundation-stones for a peaceful, prosperous and modern State. We are engaged in efforts to strengthen the fabric of society by rekindling the spirit of patriotism and uplifting the moral integrity of our citizens. The Government is endeavouring to preserve the national character and cultural heritage and to raise the standard of education and health of the entire country.

It is a source of immense pride and satisfaction that our efforts have achieved a significant measure of success in charting a new course for the country. Insurgency, which was born with our independence, is now coming to a close. The unprecedented return to the legal fold of 15 out of the 16 armed groups speaks volumes for our efforts at national reconsolidation.

On 10 July 1995 the Government also lifted the restrictions placed on Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. The lifting of restrictions is unconditional. A large number of individuals against whom action had been taken in accordance with the laws of the land have also been released.

I am also pleased to be able to say that we in Myanmar have been shouldering our responsibilities in combating the menace posed by narcotic drugs. The Myanmar Armed Forces have been mounting major offensives against drug traffickers, including the forces of Khun Sa. Since the end of 1988 there have been 823 engagements with the drug traffickers. In these clashes, 16 officers and 567 other ranks from the armed forces sacrificed their lives for the country, 55 officers and 1,744 other ranks were wounded in action and 153 weapons were lost. Enemy losses amounted to 720 killed, 118 captured, 221 surrendered and 708 assorted weapons seized. The numbers speak for themselves. We are determined to wage war against the drug traffickers as a matter of national responsibility and we see it as our duty to humanity. Our men have sacrificed life and limb so that the world may be rid of the scourge of narcotic drugs. The actions of the Myanmar Armed Forces deserve to be accorded due recognition, just as the Blue Helmets have been commended for their valour and courage.

In order to succeed in the fight against narcotic drugs the Myanmar Government in May 1989 initiated an integrated rural-development programme of an unprecedented nature and scope in the border areas. Subsequently, in 1992 a separate ministry devoted to the development of border areas and national races was established. We are fully confident that once those areas are developed, the living standards of the local populace

are raised and alternative means of livelihood are made available, poppy cultivation will be totally eradicated.

We have relied on our own resources in promoting the development programmes in the border areas. Over 2,842 million kyats, the equivalent of US$ 400 million, have been expended for infrastructure-building. We are grateful that, recently, Japan approved a grant of 1 billion yen — US$ 10 million — to be used to purchase fertilizers and agricultural machinery and implements for the food-development programme in the border regions. It is our hope that others too will join hands with us to develop those regions in order that humanity may be freed from the menace posed by narcotic drugs.

On the economic front, Myanmar has made important gains. The economy registered a growth rate of 6.8 per cent in 1994-1995, and prospects look bright for the future. Foreign investment in Myanmar totals US$ 2.7 billion and is expected to reach $4 billion by the end of the year.

An indicator of the pace of the development of the economy is the dramatic increase in the production of the staple crop, rice, permitting the export of over 1 million tons. In the meantime, Myanmar is fulfilling the basic needs of the people and is striving to narrow the gap in living standards between urban dwellers and the rural population.

In the realm of international relations Myanmar has consistently pursued a policy of peace and friendship with all States, and especially with neighbouring countries. A recent landmark event was Myanmar's accession to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation at the twenty-eighth Ministerial Meeting of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) in Brunei, paving the way for Myanmar's eventual entry into ASEAN.

In the light of the political and socio-economic transformations taking place in the country and the increased cooperation with its neighbours, Myanmar continues to make important contributions to peace and stability in the region and in the world.

The commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations is a time for reflection and for resolution. I should like to avail myself of this opportunity to renew my country's dedication and commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter and to pledge that Myanmar will contribute, however modestly, to the realization of a United Nations which will both serve the cause of world peace and fulfil the needs of humanity.

In this new era we must strive to ensure that all nations can live together in peace and harmony. Every nation must also strive to keep its house in order. We have a responsibility in our time, just as the founding fathers of the United Nations had in theirs, to bequeath to the generations to come a world that is secure and peaceful.

The Acting President: I now call upon the Secretary of External Affairs of the Federated States of Micronesia, His Excellency Mr. Asterio Takesy.

Mr. Takesy (Federated States of Micronesia): I am honoured to address the fiftieth session of the General Assembly. I wish at the outset to extend to His Excellency Mr. Diogo Freitas do Amaral my congratulations on his election to preside over the General Assembly. We are pleased that the stewardship of this anniversary session is entrusted to a distinguished and seasoned diplomat. I wish to express my confidence in his capable leadership and assure him of the cooperation of my Government in the discharge of the mandate of his office.

In this connection I wish to thank his distinguished predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Amara Essy of Côte d'Ivoire, for his dedication and excellent guidance of the work of the Assembly during its forty-ninth session.

I also wish to convey my Government's gratitude to the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, for his tireless efforts in the search for peaceful solutions to the many volatile situations and humanitarian and development issues around the world that are challenging the Organization's attention.

My Government takes this opportunity to extend a warm welcome to our neighbour, the Republic of Palau, the newest Member of the United Nations.

A few weeks from today, Member States of the United Nations will join together to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the Organization, taking note of its accomplishments and its share of failures with a view to charting an effective role for its future.

The new global map before us today presents the Organization with a unique opportunity as the primary global institution. The challenge of leadership is before us. However, this opportunity will be missed if financial

resources and the political will of its Member States are lacking.

In this connection we wish to support the statement made by the Chairman of the Group of 77 and by China last week with respect to the progress report of the High-level Open-ended Working Group on the Financial Situation of the United Nations.

I also wish to express my Government's strong support for the ongoing programme of reforms within the Organization. We support institutional reforms that will eliminate duplication of work, waste and fraud and thereby enhance the effectiveness of the Organization.

With reference to the scale of assessments, my Government finds merit in the argument that the principle of the capacity to pay seems to have fallen by the wayside in the determination of assessments. Studies point out disturbing disparities in the existing scale as compared with individual Member countries' share of the global economy. Naturally, it is the smallest Member States that are being penalized by such disparities. My Government associates itself with the report issued by the Committee on Contributions at its fifty-fifth session, held in June of this year, which called for a lowering of the floor.

The issue of human rights, implicit in the United Nations Charter, has been the topic of many debates and international conferences in the context of the work of the United Nations. We welcome the programmes of action generated by these meetings and hope that the international community will find the determination to allocate the necessary resources for their implementation.

My Government joined in the consensus of the parties for the unconditional extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) five months ago. With regard to the ongoing negotiations with respect to a comprehensive test-ban treaty, my Government welcomes the commitment by the United States to a zero- yield threshold, and we urge similar assurances by the other nuclear-weapon States.

On the other hand, during the past few months we have been deeply troubled by the occurrence of nuclear-test explosions in China and the South Pacific. These events can be seen only as detrimental to the principles of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and endangering the prospects for success in negotiating a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty.

In the important area of development, my Government fully supports the ongoing work on the Agenda for Development and the call for new approaches that would elevate development and economic policy to their deserved place, on a par with world peace and security. In the Secretary-General's recommendations of 11 November 1994, he stated that the

> "United Nations cannot be a strong force for peace unless it is also a strong force for development." *(A/49/665, para. 9)*

My Government fully associates itself with the declaration of the Foreign Ministers of the Group of 77 calling for restoration of the issue of development to the heart of the United Nations agenda, the centrality of the United Nations in promoting international cooperation for development and the creation of a balance between United Nations activities for development and its other activities.

My Government welcomes the entry into force of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea in November of last year, as well as the establishment of the International Seabed Authority. While there is much work ahead in months to come with respect to the Seabed Authority and the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, we are confident that the spirit of compromise that brought us to where we are today will continue to prevail and guide our efforts.

In this connection, my Government is also very pleased with the successful outcome of the negotiations on straddling fish stocks and highly migratory fish stocks this past July. My Government looks forward to the signing of the relevant agreement in December of this year. At this juncture, allow me to express my Government's appreciation to Ambassador Satya Nandan of the Republic of Fiji for his excellent leadership as Chairman of the Conference on that subject. As Pacific islanders, we take pride in the immense contributions of one of our own sons.

The Government of the Federated States of Micronesia is firmly committed to environmentally sustainable development. We urge all members to follow closely the crucial work of the Commission on Sustainable Development this year and to support the important work of Under-Secretary-General Nitin Desai and the Secretariat in this difficult but essential endeavour. In this connection, we continue to place great importance on the implementation of the Programme of

Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States.

At its meeting last month the South Pacific Forum adopted the Convention to Ban the Importation into Forum Island Countries of Hazardous and Radioactive Wastes and to Control the Transboundary Movement and Management of Hazardous Wastes within the South Pacific Region, also referred to as the Waigani Convention. It is an important arrangement that strengthens and supplements the effect of the Basel and London Conventions within our region.

The subject of climate change and global warming, phenomena that are influenced by mankind's emissions of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere, remains of deep concern to the people of the Federated States of Micronesia. Unfortunately, though, it seems that much of the world does not at present share our feeling of urgency regarding the continuing debate over this problem.

The developments during the past year relating to the Framework Convention on Climate Change have to some extent been encouraging, but the process still suffers greatly from the strong political and economic forces that obscure the Convention's clearly stated objective: the stabilization of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere at safe levels. Everyone agrees that this objective can be reached only through difficult adjustments within the industrialized countries and assistance to the developing world in acquiring environmentally clean technologies. It is also understood that this must be done in stages over a certain period of time. But the first steps must be initiated at once.

The First Conference of the parties of the Convention, held in Berlin earlier this year, made the very crucial determination that the initial undertakings by industrialized countries to reduce greenhouse-gas emissions were inadequate. Regrettably, the Conference did not see fit to adopt as a next step the protocol formally submitted by the Alliance of Small Island States, which would have applied a reduction formula endorsed by scientists back in 1988 as reasonable and necessary. Instead, the best the Conference could do was to mandate a working group to develop during the next two years a protocol or other legal instrument requiring specific future reductions. At the first meeting of this working group, held recently in Geneva, it was clear that powerful forces remain dedicated to defeating this process by whatever means they can apply.

Opponents of the Framework Convention have been very ingenious in casting doubts over scientific knowledge relating to climate change, but we hope that the upcoming second assessment report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change will establish once and for all the clear legitimacy of this concern and the need for action. The Panel has found, among other things, a likelihood of continuing sea-level rise of more than 18 inches, or half a metre, by the year 2100 if nothing is done. Besides the obvious disastrous effects upon islands and their populations, many heavily populated river deltas and their cities would be made uninhabitable.

The eminent Director of the University of Maryland's Laboratory for Coastal Research recently described the measurement of sea-level rise as the "dipstick of climate change". I would respectfully suggest that while sea-level rise is certainly the indicator, it is our islands and low-lying coastal areas that are the dipstick, but we are helplessly fixed and immovable.

I therefore call on this body at this session to take due notice of the accumulating knowledge relating to climate change and to reaffirm the urgent need for meaningful greenhouse gases emissions-reduction measures within the context of the Framework Convention.

I am pleased to inform this Assembly that the Government of the Federated States of Micronesia has recently ratified the Convention on desertification, and my Government will deposit its instrument of ratification in due course.

The Federated States of Micronesia sees an interrelationship between the three environmental Conventions — on biological diversity, climate change and desertification, respectively. And only through a collective approach and support can we have a chance to restore, protect and sustain our global environment. My Government joins in solidarity with all Members to work towards solutions through global cooperation.

The current series of underground test explosions which France has carried out in the South Pacific, and which it is continuing in the face of unprecedented international outrage, is regrettable for many reasons, but I focus here on the particular danger which these tests pose to the environment of our Pacific region.

The history of nuclear testing in the Pacific region, both north and south, is an ugly chronicle of willingness to gamble with the lives and homes of millions of island inhabitants. In the region of Micronesia, and in particular the Marshall Islands, despite broad assurances that testing

was safe, we are learning only now, years later, that the disastrous effects on the health of island peoples have been far worse than science could have predicted at the time.

An established principle of international law prescribes that a State must ensure that its actions within its jurisdiction or control do not cause damage within other States or within areas beyond the limits of its national jurisdiction. That principle is embodied in article 4 of the Convention for the Protection of the Natural Resources and Environment of the South Pacific Region, otherwise known as the Noumea Convention. Together with nine Pacific countries and the United States, France is a party to that Convention. It is also an expressed principle in the Convention on Biological Diversity, to which France is also a State party.

The Noumea Convention and the Convention on biological diversity also contain clear requirements regarding advance, transparent environmental impact assessments of projects which might have harmful effects on the environment. No in-depth, comprehensive environmental impact assessment of France's underground nuclear testing programme in the South Pacific has ever been carried out.

France has sought to reassure the world by saying that the test area will be open to any assessment desired, as soon as its present tests are over. Without question, France will bear a heavy responsibility to ensure against future leakage, the probability of which is very high. Picture the shattered substratum of a small atoll which has undergone over 120 nuclear explosions, one of which caused a tidal wave. Surely, each succeeding explosion increases the likelihood of leakage from the accumulation of radioactive materials concentrated below. In my Government's view, the proposition deserves assessment before further tests proceed, especially since France's obligation under both of the treaties I have mentioned includes observance of the "precautionary principle".

We hope that the collective voice of this body at this session will finally convince France that it must respect the interests of the Pacific region and the world by ending the nuclear degradation of Polynesian atolls and taking the necessary actions to prevent future radioactive leakage from them.

A common thread throughout these remarks has been one of hope because, at its fiftieth anniversary, more than ever, this Organization is the greatest hope for a future in which nations, in cooperation with one another, can address the bewildering array of problems whose implications, while local in their effects, far transcend national boundaries.

Our small, relatively young nation, remote and underdeveloped, joins with many others in similar circumstances in feeling blessed that, at this juncture in history, there is a sense of universality within the community of nations. At a time when the earlier "doomsday mentality" no longer lies at the foundation of international relations, it gives us hope that the passing of that phase will now make room for more serious contemplation of the future of the planet we all must share.

It is good that we are celebrating this important milestone in human history, this fiftieth anniversary of our forum for the world's nations, but if it is to be more than just a forum, we must all keep a vision of our purpose in coming here each year and in expending so much effort throughout the year at conferences and at home to exchange our respective views.

In the end, we must find ways to transcend the national assumptions about each other and determine to create a level of real cooperation which will consolidate the effectiveness of our individual efforts. That is why today the United Nations is more important than ever — indeed, why it is crucial. It is through this Organization, and through no other, that the breakthrough to which I refer can be achieved.

And so I close, as I opened, with reference to the opportunity that makes this Organization our strongest basis for confidence and our hope for the future. We know that we are not alone in these views, and we look forward to working very hard during this, the fiftieth session of the General Assembly, to do our part in making it, not only a well-deserved celebration, but a springboard to a bountiful future to which our descendants will look back and say, "They did not let us down."

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in the general debate for this meeting.

I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

Before doing so, may I remind members that statements in the exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to five

minutes for the second intervention and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Gnehm (United States of America): The statement made today by the head of the delegation of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya is but the latest example of Libya's continued effort to try to turn its international obligations into an issue between States. It is not. We are talking about international obligations. These are obligations imposed on Libya by the Security Council of the United Nations. The obligations are clear and they have not changed.

So-called compromises offered by Libya are unacceptable. There can be no negotiation between Libya and the Security Council on the fulfilment of Chapter VII sanctions. The fact is, Libya refuses to meet the requirements of the Security Council in resolutions passed by that organ, and in doing so shows the measure of its regard for this Organization.

Evasion of those requirements is not the road to a solution to this problem. The Libyan Government knows what needs to be done to meet its obligations and effect an end to sanctions. The sooner it does so, the better.

Mr. Gomersall (United Kingdom): In his speech earlier today, the representative of Libya referred at length to the bombings of Pan Am flight 103 and UTA flight 772. I would like to take this opportunity to restate my Government's policy on this issue.

We regret the fact that Libya has failed to comply with the provisions of Security Council resolutions 731 (1992), 748 (1992) and 883 (1993). The United Kingdom seeks no more and no less than full Libyan compliance with those resolutions. In order to do this, Libya must ensure the appearance of those charged with the bombing of Pan Am 103 for trial before the appropriate Scottish or United States court. It must satisfy the French judicial authorities with respect to the bombing of UTA 772. It must commit itself definitively to ceasing all forms of terrorist activity and all assistance to terrorist groups, and demonstrate by concrete actions its renunciation of terrorism.

So-called compromises offered by Libya and referred to in the Libyan representative's speech earlier today are unacceptable. There can be no question of Libya seeking to negotiate with the Security Council about its obligations under Chapter VII of the Charter.

As a result of the Libyan failure to comply with the relevant resolutions, the Security Council, in the course of 10 reviews, has been unable to conclude that the sanctions regime against Libya should be changed. My Government calls again on Libya to comply with the resolutions in full and without further delay. Then the Security Council will be able to consider the lifting of sanctions.

Mr. Gaussot (France) (*interpretation from French*): A delegation referred again today to the question of nuclear tests in unacceptable terms that compel my delegation to recall certain facts once again.

First, our underground nuclear tests in no way affect the health of the population or the natural environment. Eminent international experts have confirmed this many times and again recently.

Secondly, the most recent series of tests that France is undertaking, limited to a maximum of eight, does not contravene its international obligations, particularly that of utmost restraint, to which it has subscribed. Restraint is not the same thing as prohibition.

Furthermore — and this point is fundamental — far from contradicting the aim of achieving a comprehensive test-ban treaty by 1996, the current round of tests furthers it. Indeed, it is because it will have undertaken a final series of tests, to be completed before the end of May 1996, that France will be in a position to adhere without reservation to such an international agreement. Above all, this completion of its testing will allow my country to advocate the "zero option": a treaty which will ban all nuclear tests and all other nuclear explosions at any level.

As is well known, France was the first nuclear Power to commit itself — it did so on 10 August 1995 at the Conference on Disarmament — to this vital option. The most recent French tests therefore fall within, and should be considered in, the context of the conclusion of a truly significant treaty — that is, a treaty that will provide for no exception and allow no circumvention.

As to the statement made by the Libyan representative, my delegation expresses its solidarity with the delegations of the United States and the United Kingdom, whose Governments were referred to. The French delegation reasserts that Libya must comply with all the obligations imposed on it by the Security Council in its resolutions 748 (1992) and 883 (1993). Libya's

reintegration into the international community and the lifting of the sanctions regime cannot be envisaged until those obligations have been met.

Mr. Azwai (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*interpretation from Arabic*): I should like to respond to the comments of three Western States — the United States, the United Kingdom and France — concerning their comments on the statement we made earlier in this meeting.

It is wrong to state that Libya has not met its obligations under the Security Council resolutions. Everyone knows that Libya has adhered to its obligations, respected international law and, through the non-aligned countries, requested the three Western States to offer their definition of the term "terrorism". We have received these definitions from the United Kingdom and France and have given them serious consideration.

My country has declared its full condemnation of all forms of terrorism. It even called for the United Nations to convene a special session of the General Assembly to consider the problem of terrorism and declared that it will contribute to all efforts that develop from such a session to establish counter-terrorism measures and to promote international cooperation in that regard.

My country is well aware that this scourge came principally from the West. My country has been one of the victims of the phenomenon. Libya's cities and villages and even the home of its leader have all been the targets of aerial bombardment under the cover of darkness. My country does not deny that it has cooperated positively with and assisted national liberation movements, particularly in Africa, and we take pride in the fact that our efforts in that respect have been crowned with success. South Africa has finally restored the rights of its people, as have Zimbabwe, Namibia, Mozambique, Angola and other African countries. The issue is a matter of differing criteria and differing outlooks.

As for the Pan Am incident, my country never rejected out of hand the suspecting of two of its citizens. Libya only refused to turn them over to the United States or to the United Kingdom, since this, on the one hand, runs counter to Libyan legislation and, on the other, cannot take place since we have no extradition treaties with either of the two countries. Yet, we took the step of declaring that we accepted that the suspected individuals be tried in a third country before a court that would guarantee justice and impartiality.

My country has accepted the proposal put forward by the League of Arab States to have the two suspected individuals stand trial by Scottish judges, under Scottish law at the International Court of Justice in The Hague. As that proposal has been supported by the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) and the Non-Aligned Movement, we are committed to it. We do not believe that the Security Council or any other body has the right to ask Libya to violate its own laws or to surrender its sovereignty. We paid a very dear price for our freedom and sovereignty: half our people paid for both with their lives and we are prepared to pay with the other half rather than surrender and knuckle under.

It runs counter to Libyan laws and sovereignty to have Libyan nationals stand trial in the United Kingdom or the United States of America and, therefore, this cannot be accepted. This, however, cannot be construed as disrespect for international legality. My country has demonstrated time and time again that it fully upholds international legality. On three difference occasions we have applied judgments by the International Court of Justice irrespective of whether the judgment was in our favour or against us. We respect the Security Council and international legality, and, as far as this issue is concerned, everyone knows that it is a legal matter which could have been resolved by the application of the Montreal Convention that deals with this specific subject, namely, the safety of commercial flights. Very clearly, that Convention gives my country the right to try the suspected individuals. Yet, my country, out of a desire to resolve this problem and in the belief that the families of the victims are entitled to know the full truth, has accepted that its citizens be tried in a third country, for the whole world to see. My country is committed to this and cannot give in to anything beyond that.

Mr. Gnehm (United States of America): The representative of Libya has the gall to use the word "victims". The victims that we want to remember today are in graves. We have heard a lot of words over the years. We do not need more words. We only need Libya to comply with the Security Council resolution.

Mr. Azwai (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*interpretation from Arabic*): I should like to say that if there is any human feeling that urges anyone to allow the families of the Pan Am and UTA flights victims, or to allow anyone to know the truth, it must be known that Libya is the first victim because its population of 4 million human beings have become victims to these two incidents as there is an

attempt by the West to destroy the people of my country. An unfair blockade which has lasted for more than three years now has been imposed on them. My country is trying to seek the very minimum stipulated by the United Nations Charter: either to have recourse to the International Court of Justice or to arbitration or to negotiation. How on earth could problems be resolved unless we follow the simplest course of action: sitting together at the negotiating table? That major Powers could act at will as both adversary and judge is unacceptable to my country. I think that caring for the families of the victims and caring for international peace and justice should be everybody's responsibility and not my country's alone. The major Powers and permanent members of the Security Council have a much greater responsibility. We are prepared to sit right now to discuss and resolve all problems, or, failing this, to have recourse to the International Court of Justice. For the information of members of the General Assembly, the issue, basically, is still before the International Court of Justice. We should either wait for the International Court of Justice to judge the case, and we are committed to abide by its judgment, or we should sit together at the negotiating table or resort to international arbitration. Or, if the proposal by the Arab League is accepted, the two suspected individuals should stand trial in a third country, not in Libya, or in Scotland or in the United States, but in a third country. If those who level the accusation have any real authentic evidence, let us go to a neutral country and let us have recourse to justice and to the truth, to nothing else.

The meeting rose at 6.20 p.m.

United Nations A/50/PV.18

General Assembly

Official Records

Fiftieth Session

18th plenary meeting
Wednesday, 4 October 1995, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Freitas do Amaral . . . . . (Portugal)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Ould Ely (Mauritania), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Agenda item 9 *(continued)*

General debate

The Acting President (*interpretation from Arabic*): I call first on the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Panama, His Excellency Mr. Omar Jaén Suárez.

Mr. Jaén Suárez (Panama) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Allow me at the outset, Sir, to express my satisfaction and that of my delegation at the President's election to guide our deliberations. We have strong ties with Portugal, based on the many cultural values that we have historically shared on the fertile soil of the Ibero-American community. For this reason, it is a great pleasure for me to offer Don Diogo Freitas do Amaral our sincerest cooperation and to congratulate him in advance, by virtue of his well-known qualities, on his successful leadership of this memorable fiftieth session of the General Assembly.

The delegation of Panama wishes to take this opportunity to express to the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, our recognition of the skill, intelligence and dedication with which he is fulfilling his responsibilities at the head of our Organization.

This fiftieth anniversary has been a year rich in events. Under the leadership of the United Nations, there have been two major world gatherings — the World Summit for Social Development at Copenhagen and the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing — which have focused the attention of the world on matters that are highly complex and difficult because of their cultural, social and political implications.

It is gratifying to see that these meetings have fundamentally mobilized women, who are increasingly occupying their rightful role, and that the Conferences have contributed enormously to convert the quest for a solution to the problems of the family and of children into the responsibility of us all, and into a moral imperative that transcends the healthy differences between us. Panama values as a substantive result the hopeful consensus and the important guidelines agreed upon.

We reiterate the responsibility of Panama in the Non-Aligned Movement, as well as our readiness to attend the Summit at Cartagena de Indias, Colombia, to contribute to the necessary review, just as we greatly value our participation in the Group of 77. In this context, we reiterate our deepest solidarity with the least developed countries, with which we are cooperating within our means.

My delegation is convinced of the need to bring this Organization up to the level of its new and growing responsibilities, and to adapt its functioning, its procedures and its structures to the new conditions that

95-86202 (E)

This record contains the original text of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, *within one month of the date of the meeting*, to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, Room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

characterize contemporary international society. We are convinced that this is a feeling shared by all Member States, and we believe that existing differences will in due course be resolved.

Panama is following with great attention the discussions taking place in the Working Groups on the Security Council, on the financial situation, on the supplement to "An Agenda for Peace" and on the "Agenda for Development". In particular, and in accordance with decisions taken in the Rio Group, Panama believes that the increase in the membership of the Security Council should aim at correcting existing imbalances in the regional distribution of membership, as well as changing its procedures and working methods, so that the Council can function in a transparent way, in keeping with the letter and spirit of the Charter. In this context, we support the admission of Germany and Japan as permanent members of the expanded Security Council.

We are convinced that the expectations of the international community for renewed action by the United Nations can be satisfied only if the financial crisis confronting the Organization is overcome in such a way as to allow it to respond to the mandates of Member States. We are particularly concerned at the consistent trend towards a reduction in funds for development and cooperation programmes, as well as proposals to reorient food programmes towards emergency assistance programmes.

We consider the review and indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to be of extreme importance, together with the approval of provisions for its periodic review. As a State party to the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which establishes the first nuclear-weapon-free zone, and as a coastal State of the Pacific, Panama wishes to reiterate the Declaration of the Rio Group regarding the resumption of nuclear testing, because that practice has a negative impact on the delicate compromises that this subject involves, as well as the Group's readiness to continue to negotiate treaties for the total prohibition of such testing, as well as the production and use of chemical and biological weapons.

Likewise, we vehemently reject all forms of terrorism, wherever they exist, as well as expressions of racism and intolerance, which are incompatible with our status as members of the human race. Respect for human rights is and must be a fundamental part of the new universal ethics, which my country has accepted as an integral part of our value system and which my Government is completely fulfilling.

We are profoundly concerned at the overall situation of the African continent, whose peoples deserve the best of destinies. Nonetheless, we are extremely pleased to underscore the admirable example offered to us by the South Africans who, moving beyond racial or cultural motivations, in a long and heroic effort that has caused so much suffering, have put an end to the most odious form of discrimination — apartheid. The difficulties involved in meeting, living together and working as equals in an atmosphere of tolerance and cooperation cannot conceal the important contribution being made today by the leaders of that Republic under the inspiring leadership of President Mandela, to whom we wish to accord a special recognition for having constructed the democratic foundations of a multiracial and multicultural nation, fully incorporated into the international community.

In the Middle East, particularly in Palestine and in Israel, we are delighted to see the efforts of two Governments and their respective leaders and peoples who are struggling tirelessly to consolidate the peace agreements and to move forward in building lasting peaceful coexistence. Our country wishes to add its voice of encouragement to all the forces involved in this exemplary commitment, which contributes so much to the strength of the United Nations system and to international ethics. Panama, a defender of the rights of the Palestinian people and a sincere and constant friend of the Jewish people, as well as of the Arab peoples, believes it is appropriate for the international community to begin to adjust the direction of its own decisions in order to strengthen what is new, to lend greater force to that which unites us, in order to encourage those who desire peace.

Inspired by these events, the Member States of the United Nations should recognize the recent achievements that have been made and further encourage the parties to the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina to find the political will to arrive at firm, lasting agreements that will spare their own peoples the suffering and pain of being innocent victims of war, of racism and of intolerance. The United Nations peace-keeping forces must be respected and protected, because this is what their noble mission demands and because this has been the decision of the community of nations. The same message applies to other areas of the world that are

threatened by violence, or that are subject to breaches of the peace.

I believe it is appropriate to refer to the request made by a large number of States, including Panama, to include the item of the special situation of the Republic of China in Taiwan on the agenda of the fiftieth session of the General Assembly. Panama supports this request because it is interested in the unification of China. But since that eventuality is as yet unforeseeable as regards the "when" and "how", we are convinced that both parties should coexist and participate jointly in the international community with equality and mutual respect. Panama, as a coastal country of the Pacific, and completely sovereign in the inter-oceanic Canal whose neutrality opens it to peaceful use by all nations of the world, desires friendship with all States and wishes to normalize its relations with all users of this inter-oceanic passage.

The Torrijos-Carter Treaties provide for the culmination on 31 December 1999 of the process of the return to Panama of the inter-oceanic canal and adjacent facilities and the agreed withdrawal of the troops and military facilities of the United States. This exceptional diplomatic and political event constitutes an example of the peaceful and just settlement of disputes between a world Power and a small country, which today have excellent relations of friendship and cooperation based on trust and mutual respect, as is appropriate for two States committed to efforts to consolidate prosperity, peace, security and democracy on the continent.

The regime of neutrality of the Panama Canal, in establishing freedom of transit for ships, without discrimination, promotes the strengthening of an interdependent world with an increasing trend towards international cooperation. It also provides in our hemisphere a concrete example of a system of collective security which ensures the peaceful uses of that inter-oceanic canal, openly, on equal conditions, both in times of peace and in times of war, for ships of all flags and nations of the world. From this rostrum we reiterate the invitation to States Members of the United Nations to adhere to the Treaty concerning the Permanent Neutrality and Operation of the Panama Canal.

We are and shall remain the Western hemisphere's key to the immense Pacific. President Ernesto Pérez Balladares's recent successful tour of Asia, following his attendance at the Quito Summit of the Rio Group, and his acceptance of the invitation of the President of the United States to go to Washington reflect the desire to reaffirm clearly our decision to establish the closest political, diplomatic and commercial relations with all nations in the geographic arc from Japan to Australia, through the Philippines, and including all the other coastal States of the Asian continent. In keeping with this, we are interested in being admitted to the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Council, as is appropriate for a country that is essentially maritime and commercial.

We therefore wish to continue to be the point of convergence, the meeting-point, of races, cultures and civilizations. We wish to continue to express our natural historical and geographical calling, which inspired the Amphictyonic Congress of Panama of 1826, initiated by Simón Bolívar, the Liberator, and which later made possible the emergence of the Organization of American States, the United Nations, the Contadora Final Act and the Rio Group — cornerstones of agreement, dialogue, peace and regional and universal democracy.

This explains that our openness to the Caribbean basin, in entering the Association of Caribbean States, our incorporation into the Central American Integration System and our admission to the Andean Group as a permanent observer are basic to our foreign policy, which involves intense activity to create bonds of integration and cooperation in the framework of fruitful, open regionalism. In this context, we believe it extremely important to express our encouragement for the efforts being made by the Secretary-General and his Group of Friends in the negotiations aimed at bringing peace at last to the noble people of Guatemala. We welcome the fact that Contadora is once again becoming a point of reference in the painstaking negotiation of national conciliation for that fraternal people. Panama is honoured to have hosted very recently the parties that reached the initial agreements to bring lasting peace to Guatemala.

We welcome the achievements of the European Union and its members, and recognize the value of its important contribution to international cooperation. We encourage it to complement this contribution by intensifying trade with our own country and our region through renewed readiness to facilitate access for our products to its markets. We are conscious that Panama is a bridge not only to the Pacific, but also to the Atlantic, which opens up new opportunities with the States of the European Union. We are following with optimism and attention developments in the countries in transition, with which we wish to have close relations and increased exchanges.

Panama, which is today a stable and secure democracy respectful of human rights, with a Government that represents with full legitimacy a people determined to shape for itself a great future of peace and well-being, wishes to remain the cross-roads of international trade, open to all parts of the world, where, in an era of globalization and market integration, the goods and services that are the principal wealth produced by nations can circulate.

Because of everything we are and everything we wish to remain, we are here today to share the opportunities that arise from a new situation, which, because it is not imposed by the manifest destiny of others, promises to open up paths towards a great future of cooperation and integration with the region and the world.

Panama is particularly proud to invite the members of the international community that use our inter-oceanic waterway to join us in September 1997 in our capital for the Universal Congress on the Panama Canal, where all the direct and indirect beneficiaries of this marvel of the modern world can see the progress in the smooth transfer of the administration and control of the Panama waterway at the end of this century, and consider its modernization and enlargement so that in the twenty-first century it can continue to be the most efficient, most competitive and safest means of maritime transport for the exchange of merchandise and products vital to the economies of many countries of the world. Recognizing the importance of this matter, the General Assembly, at its third plenary meeting, held on 22 September 1995, made it agenda item 162 for the fiftieth session, under the title "Universal Congress on the Panama Canal".

We invite representatives to participate with us in the development of the infrastructure of transport and trans-isthmus communications to serve the continent and the world, with the creation — already under way — in our country, on the banks of the inter-oceanic Canal between the Pacific and the Caribbean, of a large port for the storage and handling of goods, which will complement the operation of the modernized Panama Canal. We also invite representatives to participate in the City of Learning project, a great international centre for the exchange of cultures and knowledge, being promoted by our country on the banks of the Canal.

We also wish to say that we have offered the American hemisphere our territory and all the infrastructure and installations necessary to establish a multilateral centre to combat drug-trafficking and related crimes. Panama raised this matter at the recent Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Rio Group, which endorsed the idea and has put it to the President of the United States, Bill Clinton, because we believe that we can succeed in this enormous struggle only if all countries coordinate their plans and actions. At the same time, we strongly support the holding of a second international conference against the use of and illicit trafficking in drugs in order to deal with a problem that has become universal in scope.

Panama, as a founding Member of this Organization and a signatory of the San Francisco Charter, has been with the United Nations for its 50 years, carrying on with it step by step, day by day, observing its magnificent achievements and its great difficulties, which for some are overwhelming. But this is not a time for fear or regrets; it is a time for new endeavours, a time to promote new forms, ways and means of international cooperation, with a view to generating, by cultivating the complementary development of our national individualities, the cultural, economic and human resources that can enable us to be free of poverty and backwardness and to open an ever-broadening road to understanding, tolerance, peace and prosperity as we enter the third millennium.

The Acting President (*interpretation from Arabic*): I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Lebanon, His Excellency Mr. Fares Bouez.

Mr. Bouez (Lebanon) (*interpretation from Arabic*): In a few days the United Nations will be marking the first half-century of its existence. This historic occasion, which the world with its different races, ethnic groups, religions, and creeds will celebrate, will reach its peak here at United Nations Headquarters, where world leaders and Heads of State will meet.

This occasion, while it should reaffirm the need for the United Nations, and underline its importance and the importance of its principles, objectives, and activities, will, at the same time, pose certain questions about the current state of the Organization and where it stands today. Such questions must be viewed in the context of the principles that governed the establishment of the United Nations and the objectives it was meant to achieve. For it must be recalled that mankind wanted the United Nations to be an enterprise for peace, harmony, solidarity, dialogue, and *rapprochement* amongst peoples and cultures of the world.

Through this legitimate dream, mankind sought to build an edifice for rights, justice and peace. The United Nations was meant to be an arbiter, a forum where people could seek to defend their rights whenever they are denied, and to redress injustice whenever oppression prevails. By establishing the United Nations, humanity wanted to put an end to the era of war and to open the door to peace, national sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity, and to protect peoples' freedom of choice.

In the era of the communications and transportation revolution, when political, economic, demographic, security and cultural barriers are lowered, people need the United Nations more than ever. They need a forum for constructive dialogue and an effective and permanent mechanism for consultation, cooperation, and coordination.

We are witnessing a scientific and technological revolution that intensifies the need for a greater synergy that would enable us to meet increasingly complicated demands and challenges, to bridge the widening gap between nations and, together, to do what no nation can do alone.

The world's demographic explosion has put the Earth's environment under constant pressure to cater to the increasing demands made upon it. Competition for the world's resources is on the rise, as is the imbalance between human needs and disposable resources. The accumulation of lethal and sophisticated nuclear, chemical, and bacteriological weapons, and the concomitant increase in their destructive capabilities across continents, increase peoples' risk of annihilation. Their proliferation and possession by some States that lack even the absolute minimum of credibility and fail to provide any political guarantees regarding the decision to use such weapons, increases the world's need for guarantees and controls on armament.

The information revolution is contributing to the rapid dissemination of information about political, scientific, and economic achievements across boundaries. Unequal access to information by some societies is accentuating their isolation and causing them to be bound by their traditions, either because they want to protect their national identity, or because they are unable to assimilate such achievements. Extremist and fundamentalist tendencies express the fear haunting these societies against what are often perceived as threats to their national identity.

All these risks make it more important than ever before to reactivate United Nations machinery and to reinvigorate confidence in its justice and credibility, to free its decisions from hegemony, to redress its imbalances, and to apply the same standards in its approach and commitment. That is the path we should take if the United Nations is to remain a world authority and an alternative to heated confrontations.

So, where do we stand at present with regard to the moral authority and credibility of United Nations resolutions? How can we apply one standard across the board?

The world has witnessed and continues to witness a number of local and regional crises. Lebanon, which has suffered from the scourge of war, follows what is happening around the world with grave concern and interest.

Rwanda and Bosnia and Herzegovina are two clear examples of our inability to act in the face of horrible atrocities. More than 20 years have passed and the Cypriot problem still awaits settlement, despite numerous relevant resolutions adopted by the General Assembly and Security Council to unify the island and to protect its independence and territorial integrity. The question of the islands of the United Arab Emirates still awaits a solution that would ease tension in the region.

Four years ago the Madrid Conference was convened. We were optimistic about the invitation, the content, and the sponsorship. As the co-sponsors were super-Powers, and the Conference was to be convened on the basis of establishing a just, comprehensive, and lasting peace anchored in the principle of "land for peace", and on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), and 425 (1978) respectively, we accepted the invitation, assuming that those who accepted it were also in agreement with its content and that what remained to be done was to discuss the questions of mechanisms and schedules.

However, years have passed and months have gone by while some waited for the results of elections and for the arrival of the opportune moment at the domestic level. Time has passed while some awaited circumstances that, they bet, were bound to strengthen their positions, or conducted secret negotiations that they expected to weaken, isolate or single out some other side. The result has been that we are still discussing today the basic principles which were supposed to have been settled at the very beginning of the Conference.

The principle of land for peace still awaits the materialization of the concept of "land". The principle of withdrawal is still being obfuscated by the term "redeployment". We are told that resistance must cease, without any guarantee that withdrawal or liberation will ever take place. We are told that the boycott must end, but no guarantee is given that usurped rights will be restored. We are required to engage in multilateral negotiations on complementary subjects while the fundamental bilateralism remains frozen and while we know not whether there will be peace, or what the form and content of that peace will ever be.

We are required to shake hands and to celebrate before we know what exactly we are supposed to celebrate. We, the victims of aggression, are required to give security guarantees to the aggressor. Those who do not possess weapons are required to reassure those who possess one of the largest nuclear and chemical arsenals which the world could not make subject to the Non-Proliferation Treaty when the Treaty was extended.

The media hype that surrounded the recent signing of the second Protocol between the Palestinian Authority and Israel, which glorified the event and amplified its content, makes us wonder about the extent of the authority that will be exercised by the Palestinian people, the size of the territories that would be returned and, ultimately, to wonder about the fate of three quarters of the Palestinian people who were displaced from the land of Palestine. What about their right to return, their right to a nationality, to an identity? What about those whose status was never discussed either at Oslo or at Taba? We wonder: Could those tiny specks of land — in which an authority less than that of a municipality will be exercised — be called the Palestinian homeland? Doesn't the isolation of those tiny specks into so-called security islands mean additional prisons in which anger and rancour will fester?

Will the 400,000 Palestinians who are now in Lebanon and others who are elsewhere in the world ever enjoy their long-awaited right of return? How can we have faith in a country that boasts of its desire for peace and its intention to restore legitimate rights to people while it continues to violate those rights, to build settlements and to occupy and confiscate land? It cannot be credited unless it desists from such actions forthwith, particularly in southern Lebanon, where it has recently confiscated lands.

Could this bloated glorification by the media serve as an alternative to the restoring of legitimate rights? Could this anaesthetization of international public opinion, this illusion of a solution, actually put an end to the problem?

We in Lebanon are patiently and diligently continuing to rebuild our homeland after the destruction of a ravaging war. We are continuing to build our institutions and our security. Those who had emigrated are continuing to return to their homeland, and those who were displaced are continuing to return to their villages. Laws are being enacted so that Lebanon may regain its natural place in the Middle East on the economic, political and cultural levels.

Lebanon has suffered for far too long from the consequences and reverberations of the Middle East crises. Lebanon has paid its heavy dues. Once again it proves that it is capable of facing difficulties and rising up to challenges and that its unity formula is much stronger than was once believed, because it is the only definitive reality.

Lebanon will once again prove that certain nations have a history that is more extensive than their geography and a role that is much larger than their physical size. As long as Lebanon's sovereignty and independence continue to be compromised; as long as major parts of its land continue to be out of its control; as long as the Lebanese State continues to be unable to extend its full sovereignty over all its national territory by its own legitimate national forces; as long as Israel continues to occupy Lebanon's territories 17 years after the adoption by the Security Council of resolution 425 (1978) which demanded Israel's complete withdrawal from Lebanon; as long as Lebanese citizens continue to languish in Israeli prisons and detention camps, ignored by the international community in clear violation of their human rights — as long as all this continues, the wounds will never heal and the bleeding will never stop.

So long as the occupation of more than one eighth of our national territory continues; so long as Israeli raids daily sow our land with cluster bombs, fission bombs, scatter bombs and booby traps for the killing of children; so long as such criminal acts continue to be perpetrated against a people that refuses to surrender; so long as our women continue to mourn the loss of their loved ones and so long as our children cry out, the cries of anguish will continue to haunt the world and the voices raised against injustice will grow louder than the roar of the guns that defend a senseless occupation.

The occupier has used all the means available to it, but has failed to contain this anger. Israel's logic of security zones inside Lebanese territories and security belts has failed also. The cost has by far outweighed the returns.

The Security Council's method in dealing with Lebanon's complaints does not represent the optimum means of performing the role of that important body. We have waited so long for the implementation of Security Council resolutions. Instead, the Council has refrained from condemning aggression, and if it happens to do so, it tends to equate the aggressor with the victim of the aggression. When it fails to condemn, it uses as a pretext the desire not to cause any distortion to the peace process.

The peace negotiations, however, do not absolve the Security Council from the obligation to perform its appointed role at any given moment, especially when an act of aggression is committed in the shadow of a peace process. Nor do they absolve the Council from its responsibility towards international peace. Discriminating in the application of United Nations resolutions for some and depriving others of the right to call for implementation; discriminating in the application of the stipulations of Chapter VII of the Charter on some trouble-makers while refraining from such application on others in a sort of cover-up for the practices of those protected others, will deprive the United Nations of credibility as an arbiter to whom the nations of the world have recourse in search of justice.

The days when the problems of people were confined to their own countries are over. The days when State boundaries were barriers that contained a country's crises are over as well. Regardless of how distant any country may be from a crisis area, it can none the less remain subject to repercussions of such crisis. Thus every country remains vulnerable to the political, economic, environmental, demographic and security problems of other countries.

The Middle East must not forever be a fiery volcano that threatens international peace and security. This way, the region will not see better days nor will time be forever on the side of those who seek peace.

We have to realize that peace must be equitable, not biased; just, not unjust; genuine, not ceremonial; balanced, not deficient. Peace must help the refugee to return rather than consecrate his displacement. Peace must satisfy those who rebel against injustice, not provoke their anger.

The new tendency to weigh the suitability of resolutions, to selectively enforce some and freeze some, to elaborate different interpretations to different resolutions, an enterprise that is engaged in, from time to time, in the wings of the Organization under the pretext of having to interpret resolutions with reference to the circumstances under which they were adopted, all this threatens credibility of the United Nations as a whole.

This then is the situation we face today, and it is against the backdrop of this situation that I congratulate the President on his election at this session and extend appreciation to his predecessor, to the Secretary-General and to the commanders, officers, and soldiers of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), whom I wholeheartedly thank for their valuable efforts under difficult circumstances.

May God guide us to peace and to acquitting ourselves in the eyes of the generations to come.

The Acting President (*interpretation from Arabic*): I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nigeria, His Excellency Chief Tom Ikimi.

Chief Tom Ikimi (Nigeria): I am delighted to address the General Assembly in the year of its fiftieth anniversary. On behalf of the Nigerian delegation, I convey warm congratulations to the President on his election to preside over the General Assembly at its fiftieth session. We are confident that in carrying out his duties he will bring his wisdom, competence and diplomatic skills to bear on the work of the Assembly. We congratulate his friendly country, Portugal, and reaffirm the warmth of the bilateral relations between our two countries.

Let me also convey our sincere thanks to his distinguished predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Amara Essy of Côte d'Ivoire, for the outstanding manner in which he conducted the affairs of the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session. I also wish to express my delegation's appreciation to the Secretary-General for the courageous manner in which he is responding to the challenges of his office.

The uniqueness of the current session is not lost on my delegation. It is not only a solemn occasion to reflect on the achievements and difficulties of our Organization during the past 50 years, but also a golden opportunity to chart a new way forward. We therefore hope that the work of this and future sessions of the General Assembly

will continue to be inspired by the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter.

The establishment of the United Nations in the aftermath of the Second World War marked a turning point in the history of international relations. As an intergovernmental Organization whose principal tasks include the maintenance of international peace and security, the promotion of international cooperation for development and the progressive development and codification of international law and respect for human rights, the United Nations best epitomizes the will of the peoples of the world to live together.

We in Africa attach great importance to this fiftieth anniversary, as in 1945 the vast majority of our countries were not independent and therefore could not participate in the processes leading to the signing of the United Nations Charter in San Francisco. It is gratifying, however, that from being represented by only four countries on that occasion, Africa has since grown to be the largest regional group within the Organization. This is in accordance with the universalist aspirations of the United Nations.

The phenomenal growth in membership evokes happy memories of the transition of a large number of Member States, particularly from Africa and Asia, from colonial dependencies to nationhood. For many years the United Nations was the catalyst in this process. Our continental organization, the Organization of African Unity (OAU), from its inception in 1963, similarly embraced this objective as a primary preoccupation. It was my country's privilege to be associated at the regional and global levels with the struggle against apartheid and for freedom and self-determination on the continent.

The United Nations is perhaps best known for its endeavours in the maintenance of international peace and security. This remains a major preoccupation, as events since the end of the Cold War have demonstrated that civil conflicts and political instability in many countries, particularly in the developing world, have become endemic, with grave consequences for international peace and security. These conflicts, which have their origins in, among other things, new nationalisms, ethnic differences and religious bigotry, constitute a test of the international community's will to meet the new challenges and provide appropriate solutions.

On this occasion, therefore, it is the hope of the Nigerian delegation that the Assembly will make sustained efforts to take decisions that will significantly enhance the prospects of global peace and security. We expect that further thought will be given to redefining the role of the United Nations and its perspectives on preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, peace-keeping and peace-building as continuing imperatives in crisis management and conflict resolution.

Given that the maintenance of international peace and security is a shared responsibility, the United Nations should undertake to realign and strengthen its cooperation with regional organizations and arrangements. This is not to underestimate the need for Member States to make serious efforts to prevent war and civil conflict through confidence-building measures and the formulation and implementation of appropriate domestic policies. In this regard, we cannot but reaffirm the continuing validity of the peaceful resolution of disputes through mediation, conciliation, arbitration, judicial settlement and respect for applicable international laws.

We deplore the growing arms race and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, on which vast resources are now being wasted. The nuclear genie has left the bottle and cannot now be led back into it; the trauma of Hiroshima and Nagasaki persists and continues to haunt the international conscience. Let us therefore resolve that such a tragedy will never happen again. The time for disarmament under effective international control is now.

Although progress towards the achievement of general and complete disarmament has been slow, we would like to commend the United Nations for its role in this sphere. Nigeria regards the agreements banning biological and chemical weapons as landmark arrangements. We must remain committed to the ultimate goal of the total elimination of all weapons of mass destruction.

On its twenty-fifth anniversary, in May of this year, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) was extended indefinitely. Developments since then have seriously undermined the confidence we have all reposed in the Treaty and its regime, and have regrettably cast major doubt on the commitment of Member States, particularly the nuclear Member States, to disarmament. In our view, efforts to achieve this must remain fundamental and include the conclusion of a comprehensive nuclear- test-ban treaty by 1996, the cut-off in the production of fissionable materials for weapons purposes, and the granting of security assurances by the

nuclear-weapon States to non-nuclear-weapon States in a legally binding instrument.

In our continuing efforts to ensure a peaceful and secure environment for the development of the African continent, Nigeria is delighted to welcome the successful completion of the negotiations on the Treaty of an African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone, which was endorsed by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) Council of Ministers in June 1995. By this action, African leaders have given concrete expression to their collective commitment to make the continent a nuclear-weapon-free zone. It is our expectation that during this session the international community will respect this initiative through the endorsement of the Treaty. We hope that the nuclear-weapon States will ratify the protocols to be annexed to the Treaty.

The framers of the Charter of the United Nations did, in fact, recognize that peace and development go together. Among the high purposes of our Organization is the promise of economic and social achievement by all peoples. To this end, a good deal of effort has been made by the United Nations and its agencies to support the implementation of programmes of action initiated by developing countries at national, subregional and regional levels. We commend these agencies for their efforts in tackling the problems of social and economic development.

In discussing the general issue of development, we recognize the primacy of the United Nations in promoting international cooperation for development. It is in this connection that we have welcomed the contribution of the Secretary-General in his Agenda for Development. For us in Africa, development is a question of survival. We place a particular premium on it as we confront the challenges of poverty and underdevelopment.

While the unsatisfactory economic situation of Africa has been the subject of many international conferences, the resulting programmes of action have remained largely unimplemented. Such programmes include the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990 and the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, adopted in 1991. The failure to implement these programmes has been due primarily to the lack of will and acceptance of a concept of economic interdependence by our development partners. Yet, it remains important that development should be seen as an integral and indivisible whole, an objective to be pursued collectively in the global economy.

The economic crises confronting the developing countries are multifaceted. I would, however, like to stress the pre-eminent need for the international community to resolve the external-debt crisis, which is a key impediment to growth and development in our respective countries. Most African countries devote a large proportion of their foreign exchange earnings to debt-servicing. It has, therefore, been difficult for these countries to also pursue sustained economic development objectives. It is clear that Nigeria — as, indeed, most other countries of our continent — faces limited possibilities for the implementation of their economic reform programmes without urgent and adequate debt-relief measures.

We believe that development cooperation should engender genuine interdependence, mutual interest and benefits in the context of global partnership. In the expectation that the developed countries will support and indeed assist the developing countries in their development efforts, we call for fuller cooperation between the two sides. The initiative to hold the Asia-Africa Forum in Bandung, Indonesia, in December 1994, as a follow-up to the Tokyo International Conference for the Development of Africa, was bold and imaginative. The conclusions and recommendations of these initiatives, which are also critical, need to be faithfully implemented.

The integrated approach to development being pursued by the United Nations is right and deserves to be commended. In this regard, we welcome the outcome of the recently concluded World Summit for Social Development and Fourth World Conference on Women. These conferences have helped to promote women in development and to enhance their role in public affairs. We acknowledge the interdependence of societies as underscored by these conferences, and the fact that all cultures have a contribution to make at the crossroads of civilization and development.

While recognizing the achievements of the United Nations, it is fit and proper, at this point, to identify also those areas in which the Organization has not fully realized its objectives.

On peace and security, it should be acknowledged that the United Nations has a commendable record of success. Since its founding, it is significant that there has been no global war and that the end of the cold war has enhanced the prospects for cooperation and the lessening of tension. However, new conflicts have emerged which have defied solution by the United Nations. It is evident

that the challenges of peacemaking, peace-keeping and peace-building require new perspectives and commitments from Member States. Moreover, while seeking to provide solutions to these conflicts, the United Nations must accept that it has a limit to its capacity. It should, therefore, not micromanage the internal political arrangements of countries in conflict. It is equally important that the United Nations be seen to be transparent and even-handed in crisis management in all regions. Furthermore, the United Nations should do more to cultivate and cooperate with regional organizations and arrangements in conflict resolution.

On decolonization, the balance sheet of the United Nations performance is largely positive. However, the legacies of colonialism and the challenges of nation-building have created difficulties for new States. These difficulties have resulted in the inability of many of the new States of the developing world to conduct their domestic and external relations in a manner consistent with the provisions of the Charter. The experience of a number of these States indicates that powerful members of the international community continue to insist on their models as standards for universal behaviour and application. The political and economic lives of the new States are further circumscribed by international financial institutions dominated by the economically strong. These institutions, which are as old as our Organization, have yet to adapt to the new economic realities and needs of the new States they seek to serve.

With regard to development, the objectives of the Charter have remained largely unfulfilled in view of the growing economic disparities between a minority of developed countries and the vast majority of countries which are classified as developing. Regrettably, dialogue between the North and the South, which is vital to effectively address this imbalance, has reached a deadlock. This dialogue needs to be relaunched in order to achieve a just and equitable world order for sustainable development.

Since joining the United Nations 35 years ago, Nigeria has played its part in upholding the purposes and principles set forth in the United Nations Charter. It has also pursued its objectives with dedication and commitment. From decolonization to peace-keeping, we have spared neither efforts nor resources in fulfilling our obligations under the Charter. Our record in peace-keeping speaks for itself.

Within the ambit of South-South cooperation, Nigeria has extended assistance to other developing countries, particularly in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific. In our subregion, we are in active partnership with the countries of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to accelerate development through cooperation. It is our hope that ECOWAS will become an essential component for continental integration as envisaged under the Abuja Treaty on the African Economic Community.

To avoid any doubt, I wish to state that we in Africa have long accepted that the primary responsibility for the development of our continent rests squarely on our shoulders. But the reality of our experience is that we have had to fight on the two fronts of political and economic reforms at the same time. Few regions of the world have borne such excruciating burdens in their development process. This calls for understanding and encouragement rather than indifference and benign neglect. Consequently, in addition to regional integration efforts, we in Nigeria have undertaken bold economic and political reforms. On the economic front, the current Administration in Nigeria has deregulated the economy and created new incentives for domestic and foreign investments.

On the political plane, Nigeria has embarked on courageous reforms. In spite of unforeseen difficulties and the complexities of the Nigerian situation, we have continued to make steady progress in our determined efforts to establish a veritable and enduring democratic polity. Indeed, only three days ago my Head of State, General Sani Abacha, announced a comprehensive programme of transition to democratic rule and the final disengagement of the military from power. This programme was carefully drawn up taking into account the objective realities of our national situation to ensure not only an orderly transition, but also the institutionalization of durable democratic structures of governance at all levels.

While we recognize and appreciate the understandable concerns of our foreign friends and the international community at large, we hope that due support will be given to our endeavour in the full realization that a democratic Nigeria, the most populous black nation on Earth, is an asset to itself and has much to offer the international community.

In order that the United Nations might be better equipped to discharge its responsibility as a forum for harmonizing the actions of nations, it is essential that the ongoing process of revitalization and institutional reforms

be intensified. This is necessary if the United Nations is to assert its central role in the establishment of a new world order. It is also vital if the United Nations is to truly reflect the equity and geographical balance that are critical for its efficiency and authority.

Nigeria, therefore, reaffirms its support for the expansion of the Security Council both in its permanent and in its non-permanent membership and, in this connection, my delegation renews the offer made by our country to serve the international community as a permanent member in the expanded Security Council.

As we look to the future, it is obvious that the effectiveness of the United Nations will depend on the collective will and support of its entire membership. There are two levels of responsibility in ensuring a strong and vibrant United Nations. The first is what the United Nations itself must do; the second, and more important, is what we the Member States accept to do to enable the Organization to respond effectively to our collective quest for peace, freedom, justice and development. In pursuit of these objectives, Nigeria is determined to continue making its contributions.

The Acting President (*interpretation from Arabic*): I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the United Arab Emirates, His Excellency Mr. Rashid Abdullah Al-Noaimi.

Mr. Al-Noaimi (United Arab Emirates) (*interpretation from Arabic*): On behalf of the delegation of the United Arab Emirates, it gives me great pleasure to extend my sincere congratulations to the President on his election to the presidency of the fiftieth session of the General Assembly. This demonstrates the esteem the international community holds for the President and his friendly country. We wish him every success and good fortune. We also wish to express our deep appreciation to his predecessor, His Excellency Amara Essy, the Foreign Minister of Côte d'Ivoire, who presided over the last session with wisdom and competence.

I should like to seize this opportunity to express anew our confidence in the strenuous efforts made by Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, the Secretary-General, to enhance the role of our Organization in today's world.

This session coincides with the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the foundation of the United Nations. This is an important political event in the history of this Organization, particularly in light of the rapid changes that have taken place in international relations. These changes have contributed, in varying degrees, to the achievement of some progress with regard to a number of issues that relate to disarmament, economic and social development, and to the containment of some regional conflicts.

In spite of this, our international community remains far from the desired world peace. New challenges have emerged and have entailed suffering, extermination, expulsion and famine to thousands of people. These, in turn, have affected international life as they have impacted on the economic, political and social situation in the world.

Such a situation, of course, does not measure up to the expectations the new regional and international changes gave rise to when they followed on the heels of each other. The hope of witnessing the emergence of a new world order that would favour development, peace, growth and justice has not yet taken a concrete shape that would affect the future of mankind. The emergence of such an order requires a wider framework of regional and international cooperation which would work in favour of finding peaceful solutions to world problems. Such solutions should aim at elaborating a comprehensive approach designed to promote and enhance human, economic and social development, encourage harmony, tolerance and communal solidarity, ensure respect for the customs, traditions and religious beliefs of each community and country, in addition to combating terrorism and its manifestations, combating drug trafficking, and strengthening the role of the United Nations in the areas of peace-keeping, conflict prevention and the mitigation of the human suffering of many peoples of the world, especially in the developing world. We believe that the establishment of such a world order requires a stronger political will and a much wider framework of regional and international cooperation in order for it to be compatible with the thrust of the new international changes.

The stability and security of States and the settlement of disputes have become high priorities of today's world. To achieve stability and security, new practices are needed. Such practices should be based on the provisions of international law and the principles of the Charter, especially the principles of sovereignty, regional peace, non-interference in internal affairs of States, the settlement of disputes and conflicts by peaceful means and the promotion of relations of good-neighbourliness.

On this basis, the United Arab Emirates reaffirms its position which calls for direct bilateral and unconditional negotiations with the Islamic Republic of Iran to put an end to its military occupation, which has lasted since 1971, of the three Arab islands of Greater Tunb, Lesser Tunb and Abu Moussa, as those islands form an indivisible part of the territorial sovereignty of the United Arab Emirates. If this is feasible, my country renews its initiative, announced at the last session, which calls for referring the dispute to the International Court of Justice, in view of the fact that the Court is the international body entrusted with the settlement of disputes and that many countries, including Iran, have had recourse to it in seeking to settle similar disputes.

Our peace initiatives have received support from sisterly countries in the Gulf Cooperation Council, the League of Arab States and other friendly, peace-loving nations, since what is at stake here is one of our legal sovereign rights. In spite of this peaceful approach, the Islamic Republic of Iran not only rejects those initiatives but also imposes a policy of *fait accompli* by military force. It has adopted a set of illegal measures with the aim of entrenching its occupation. Those measures conflict, not only with the principles of peaceful coexistence and good-neighbourliness, but also with the provisions of the Charter of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the Charter of the United Nations and the principles of international law.

Over the past decade, the Arabian Gulf region witnessed a number of conflicts and wars that resulted in devastation and loss in terms of human, material and environmental resources. It would have been wiser to benefit from such resources by striving for economic and social integration and sustainable development in the interests of the region's peoples who enjoy common bands of history and religion and have common interests.

The question of building confidence between the countries of the region has become one of the most significant and focal issues for the Governments of the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council. Over the past few years, those Governments have spared no effort in trying to ease the suffering caused to their peoples by past events whose consequences have demonstrated that the use or threat of force by certain parties will never lead to the achievements of their aim of changing the immutable historical and geographical realities of the region. On the contrary, the use or threat of force creates new crises and disputes that threaten international and regional peace and security. It is our belief that the best way of avoiding such a situation is to opt for dialogue, bilateral and multilateral negotiations, confidence-building measures and to comply with international legality.

In this context, we welcome all peaceful efforts and initiatives aimed at the demarcation of boundaries between the sisterly countries of the region. While we wish to put on record our firm position regarding the need to safeguard the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq, the need to ease the suffering of the Iraqi people and not to interfere in its internal affairs, we call upon the Iraqi Government to meet all its international obligations set out in relevant Security Council resolutions, especially those relating to the release of Kuwaiti prisoners and detainees and the nationals of other countries, as well as the return of Kuwaiti property still in its possession.

The United Arab Emirates welcomes the progress made in the negotiations between the Palestinians and Israelis, which led to the Declaration of Principles and complementary agreements, the latest being the agreement on the second phase of expanded self-rule in the West Bank. Implementation by the Israeli Government of those agreements would be an important and essential step towards enabling the Palestinian people to exercise its right to self-determination and to the creation of its independent State on its national soil, like any other people in the world.

In the same context, we are of the view that the achievement of a just, comprehensive and permanent peace in the Middle East is contingent on making tangible progress on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks. This will require a greater international effort, especially on the part of the two sponsors of the peace process, to encourage the Israeli Government to comply with its undertakings and obligations in the context of the principle of "land for peace" and of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 425 (1978), which stipulate complete and unconditional Israeli withdrawal from all the occupied Arab and Palestinian territories, including the holy city of Al-Quds, the Syrian Golan and southern Lebanon.

The maintenance of international peace and security is a collective international responsibility that requires the existence of political will, a new approach and the adoption of transparency, instead of the application of double standards, if the declared intentions in the field of disarmament and the elimination of weapons of mass destruction are to be translated into concrete realities. In

this field, it behoves the international community to take firmer steps to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons and the possibility of their use in any region of the world.

Proceeding from the importance we attach to the achievement of common security, we announce that on 25 September 1995, the Government of the United Arab Emirates completed the legal procedures for acceding to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. This is in conformity with our position which calls for the creation of zones that are free from all weapons of mass destruction, especially in the Middle East. This is a goal that cannot be achieved so long as Israel continues to refuse to submit to the system of international monitoring and safeguards or to accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, a posture that weakens the credibility of the Treaty.

In spite of regional and international efforts to rescue Somalia from its plight, conflicts between the disputing factions continue. We therefore call on those factions to end the bloodshed, to renounce conflict and to work towards a settlement that would restore Somalia's national unity, security and stability.

After more than three years of crimes of murder, destruction and "ethnic cleansing" that have continued to be committed by the Serbian forces against the people of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, a new turning-point has emerged in the form of the recent peace negotiations that have led to a preliminary agreement on the fundamental principles for a comprehensive settlement based on the decisions of international legality.

The United Arab Emirates, which has continued to call upon the parties, since the outbreak of the conflict, especially on the Serbian side, to resort to peaceful dialogue instead of military force, today renews its support for all the efforts undertaken by the international community, especially the Contact Groups of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the European Union and the United States of America, to solve this crisis peacefully and to guarantee respect for the territorial sovereignty of Bosnia and Herzegovina. At the same time, we stress the need, in accordance with Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, to lift the arms embargo imposed on Bosnia and Herzegovina, in order to prevent the repetition of the acts of aggression, massacre and "ethnic cleansing" that the Serbian forces have perpetrated against Bosnian civilians, particularly Muslims.

In spite of the positive situations which the changes in economic and social situations at the national, regional and international levels gave rise to over the past few years, the developing countries have continued to suffer from hunger, poverty and an aggravated debt burden, side by side with the decline in the prices of primary commodities, and the inequitable measures that the developed countries continue to apply as part of their economic and trade policies and that contribute to widening further the economic and social gap between them on the one hand and the developing countries on the other. In view of this situation, responsibility for the resumption of dialogue between the countries of the North and the South rests with the international community, in order for it to serve equally the interests of the developed and the developing countries alike.

In the midst of the celebrations on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, the United Arab Emirates supports the international call for evaluation, reform and development in the structures of the United Nations, especially with regard to increasing the membership of the Security Council and ensuring the transparency and equitable geographical representation needed if the Organization is to face up to the great challenges, whether at the level of consolidating international peace and security or at the level of promoting economic and social development.

We should like also to emphasize the need for cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations with a view to creating a wider framework of coordination and consultation, and with the aim of reaching joint peaceful solutions to current conflicts based on international law, with a view to strengthening security and stability and promoting development.

In conclusion, we hope that these aspirations will help shape and strengthen the commitment of all States to the principles of the Charter and the provisions of international law and will form a framework for the renewed unification of the power and determination of this Organization, which over the last fifty years has remained a symbol of hope in the ability of humanity to free itself from the scourges of war, hunger and disease and to live in lasting peace and security.

The Acting President *(interpretation from Arabic)*: I now call on the Chairman of the delegation of Monaco, His Excellency Mr. Jacques Louis Boisson.

Mr. Boisson (Monaco) (*interpretation from French*): Allow me first of all, and with particular gratitude, to extend to the President's predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Amara Essy, our warmest compliments for the care and discipline he displayed during his presidency of the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly. Our compliments also go to the other officers who worked with him.

Allow me also to extend the sincere congratulations of the delegation of the Principality of Monaco to the new Bureau that has just been elected and say how pleased we are to see this fiftieth session of the General Assembly under the esteemed authority of Mr. Freitas do Amaral.

Mr. Tsaty-Boungou (Congo), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The country he represents, a country that is open to the world, tolerant, accessible, culturally rich and enriched by the cultures it has encountered throughout its history, deserved to be given this recognition. Our General Assembly decided to give it and we are deeply gratified. His personality and great political experience at the national and international levels, has recognized abilities and dynamism should all help to ensure the success of this important session.

Its importance is first of all symbolic. Since man invented calendars, anniversaries have been occasions for celebration and rejoicing, and, as many speakers have said before me, for taking stock.

Since its inception, our Organization has lived through highly complex political, economic, social and cultural events and phenomena which make any appraisal difficult. It position and role have grown constantly and gained in importance over the past fifty years. The expectations that people have for it and the hopes they place in it can be measured by the depth of the disappointment and bitterness that can be seen in cases of failure or difficulty.

Has the United Nations not always tried to respond to the constant and often conflicting appeals made to it? Its responses are inspired by the fundamental values that prevailed when the Charter was drafted in 1945. Let us not forget that our States, by joining the United Nations, recognized the universality of these values. We must remain true to them and provide assistance whenever they are endangered. Recent events, still fresh in all our minds, have reminded us that these values have not always been respected and that faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, and in the equal rights of men and women and of nations, large and small, has not always been shared. And so, at this fiftieth anniversary of our Organization, these values must be recalled forcefully and with conviction at every opportunity so that these same values can be the inspiration for each of our resolutions, and every text we adopt.

Above and beyond the States that we represent and their legitimate political interests, it is individuals — often vulnerable and adversely affected by poverty or war — who must be the recipients of international cooperation. It is our duty to live up to their expectations.

When we look at the situation in this way, whether in terms of the Organization as a whole or in terms of certain of its organs, such as the Security Council, it becomes clear that there is a constant effort at adapting on the part of the international community, and a need — widely anticipated — to make our Organization more performance-oriented, more representative and closer to the concerns of its membership.

We have followed with interest the work of the various Working Groups set up to that end. We have participated, and we have made suggestions, *inter alia*, with regard to equitable representation within the Security Council and an increase in its membership.

In recent years, there has been a significant increase in the membership of the United Nations, and today it includes all, or almost all, nations of the Earth. And so it would seem quite normal that its decision-making bodies, including the Security Council, should reflect this new reality. As the famous French writer and philosopher Paul Valéry wisely said, we have reached the stage when the end of the world is beginning. For this reason, we must now redouble our efforts and heighten our vigilance so that our Organization may be able to respond to this universality, in a relevant manner and in all its diversity and richness.

Along with reforming its decision-making bodies, the United Nations must continue to improve its functioning and restructure its operations. Major efforts have been made. We would thank the Secretary-General for this, and we would also thank the members of the Secretariat.

Improving the functioning of this Organization must take account of the need to strengthen its multilingual

nature. Every staff member should know at least the two working languages of the Organization. Using just one language deprives the Organization of a rich resource. If we wish to really enhance the effectiveness of the Secretariat, we should first of all concentrate seriously on improving the language abilities of staff members so that they have a truly international culture and dimension.

As can be seen from our history, the people of Monaco and the Government of our Principality, like all peace-loving peoples, follow very closely all initiatives to reduce armaments and transform the arms race — which has gone on too long — into a race towards disarmament. Let us hope that with the end of the cold war, this approach will be strengthened and that despite technical and financial problems, disarmament processes will not only continue but speed up.

We must more than ever ensure that respect for international treaties and agreements and for international law shall replace the balance of terror, and that the law thus serve justice.

It is in this spirit that we wholeheartedly welcome the indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Our Principality was in favour of this extension, and so once again we would thank the parties to the Treaty for this courageous decision, which was inspired by trust and hope. We welcome the initiative of the Powers that have already entered into a commitment — which had been expected for next fall — to ban, over the short term, all nuclear-weapon tests. This is a major advance.

Our Government also welcomes particularly the decisions taken at the meeting, currently under way in Vienna, aimed at establishing a moratorium on the production of anti-personnel land-mines. We trust that this example will be followed widely.

Since joining the United Nations, the Principality of Monaco has been co-sponsoring the resolution on assistance in mine clearance. By contributing financially to the voluntary fund created for that purpose, my country's highest authorities wished to become involved, in a concrete way, in the implementation of that resolution. The international community, quite rightly, was shocked by the death and mutilation caused by these mines, which afflict mainly civilian populations, and children in particular.

Our delegation would hope that significant progress could be made in strengthening security and cooperation in the region of the Mediterranean, in the spirit of resolution 49/81, which we co-sponsored and which was adopted on 15 December 1994. Our Principality hopes that we will always be involved in all the initiatives relating to the Mediterranean countries.

We are also ready to support all initiatives in favour of international cooperation relating to the peaceful uses of outer space and those intended to develop, in collaboration with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, education and information programmes in support of disarmament. Making young people aware of this issue is a fundamental guarantee for peace in the years to come.

While general and complete disarmament, no doubt still far off, may today seem utopian to some, nevertheless that goal must remain our ambition. For when weapons awaken, their might and their destructive power are limitless.

This year, conflicts have been particularly devastating. Wars of another age have become the wars of our age, attacking, brutally and without distinction, men, women, children and defenceless old people.

The Government of the Principality is thus resolutely in favour of strengthening preventive diplomacy on the part of the United Nations. We would thank the Secretary-General for the initiatives he has already taken to promote the settlement of many disputes and to avoid the eruption or continuation of conflicts. The "Supplement to 'An Agenda for Peace'" is an irreplaceable source of ideas, suggestions and wise solutions.

It is no longer tolerable that the Blue Helmets be mistreated, humiliated, taken hostage and used as human shields with no means of defending themselves. Those men and women are no doubt ready to sacrifice their life, but not their dignity.

This is a particularly appropriate time to stress — because recently the Organization has been criticized very sharply — how much it has contributed to the successful solution of disputes, which have sometimes been very difficult ones, and how much courage has been needed to take certain decisions and to carry out certain operations successfully.

The hopes for peace coming out of the Middle East and Bosnia and Herzegovina represent a significant recognition of the courage that has been demonstrated,

and they are an invitation to us to continue to persevere and to be optimistic. The report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization reminds us, in a very timely way, of this, mentioning the 24 operations currently under way in the areas of preventive diplomacy, the restoration and maintenance of peace, and the four major operations, which he describes as multifaceted.

Coordination within the Secretariat between the three Departments involved in peace-keeping operations responds to current needs and concerns, a fact we note with great satisfaction.

When diplomacy, at the end of its tether, cannot prevail and conflict erupts, then barbarism triumphs. No law of war, no humanitarian law, can control it. The most vulnerable human beings and those without weapons are not spared. The only way to help them is by humanitarian assistance.

In conditions that are always very difficult and sometimes dangerous, many humanitarian operations have been conducted in a most admirable way in the last few months. Men and women have lost their lives, and I pay tribute to their suffering and to their memory. I would pay tribute in particular to the "blue helmets", the soldiers of peace, and to the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and to UNICEF, as well as to the many non-governmental organizations, some well-known, some less well-known, that have all worked tirelessly, constantly and with determination to protect, feed and provide medical and health care to populations that are adrift, assaulted by ruthless armed conflict.

This year, the Principality of Monaco contributed a large percentage of its public efforts to financial contributions in the humanitarian and social fields. We will continue to do so, hoping that the action that is taken to this end can be completed as the conflicts themselves cease.

We would like to lend our support, and this is in the spirit of the suggestions made by the Chairman of the delegation of Monaco, His Serene Highness, Crown Prince Albert, to the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session, to the thinking now under way on the strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance provided by the United Nations.

The international Tribunals created on the initiative of the United Nations designed to prosecute those responsible for crimes against international humanitarian law in the territories of the former Yugoslavia and of Rwanda must be quickly established and enabled to function so as not to disappoint the hopes that have been placed in them.

The idea of an international criminal court also deserves consideration and support.

Humanitarian actions and respect for international humanitarian law are corollaries in a period of armed conflict to the struggle being waged by the United Nations to ensure general and universal respect for human rights.

Since the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna, significant progress seems to be under way. With human and material resources that are far from sufficient to meet actual needs, the Centre for Human Rights, thanks to the commitment and the extensive experience of its staff, is successfully continuing its work.

The increase in the number and the quality of the consultants and the technical assistance provided plays a major role in ensuring that human rights are no longer just a concept, but become a reality. The presence in many countries of specialists working in varied areas, such as training, education, legislative reform and public information is one way of anchoring human rights and, thereby, the state of law in society on a day-to-day basis.

The dispatch of observers to certain troubled regions of the world today is also an excellent initiative. We hope that it will continue, because it strengthens the moral presence of the United Nations. The creation of the post of High Commissioner is also in keeping with this approach, and we would encourage his actions. International cooperation in favour of the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, which is one of the basic vocations of this Organization, is being strengthened thereby.

Rights that are applied to certain categories but which should remain universal — as the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing has just rightly recalled by describing women's rights as being inseparable from human rights — must be recognized and strengthened in their application.

The implementation of international Conventions relating to those rights is an essential element in this strengthening process. The committees set up pursuant to

those instruments are the focus of this process and of the arrangements made to implement it. They must be given the means to act and to react.

The Government of Monaco is particularly involved in the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child of 20 November 1989, and that of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination of 21 December 1965, to which the Principality of Monaco has just become a party.

The human condition in the twenty-first century will depend to a large extent not only on respect for civil and political rights, but also on the promotion of economic, social and cultural rights.

It is in terms of human rights that we have to look at development, a point made in the 1993 Vienna Declaration.

The recent World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen also adopted this approach. My Government noted with interest the conclusions of the Fourth World Conference on Women, which has just ended in Beijing.

All of this leads us to think, as does the Secretary-General, that development must first of all be recognized as a primary task of our age.

The fundamental objective must be to improve the standards of living of people throughout the world, including the developed countries, where an increasingly large part of the population is excluded from the benefits of progress.

The satisfaction of basic needs and the elimination of poverty, hunger, sickness and ignorance must be goals that we constantly seek to attain, using all available means.

The Government of Monaco devotes a major part of its resources to social assistance, particularly for women and children, those who are most in need.

The celebration in 1996 of the International Year for the Eradication of Poverty will be an excellent occasion for strengthening the implementation of these recommendations.

Recent work on the "Agenda for Development" has attracted close attention. For the Principality of Monaco, development must above all be sustainable and based on balanced economic exchange and trade, harmonious regional integration and careful protection of the environment.

The implementation of Agenda 21, the Conventions and resolutions adopted at Rio de Janeiro in support of the environment and development, is in our view a priority.

The General Assembly has decided that 1998 shall be the Year of the Oceans. The people of Monaco, like all peoples that love the sea, are eagerly awaiting this event.

Through our history, our traditions and our economy Monaco, like many other countries in the world, depends to a large extent on the sea and its resources, whether these be living, commercial, tourist or industrial.

Protecting this valuable element of the environment against all kinds of thoughtless pollution and over-exploitation is a major concern. Enough must be done at the regional and international levels to protect it. In the Mediterranean, the Principality of Monaco is doing what it can, along with its closest neighbours France and Italy, within the framework of international agreements with practical and specific goals.

The year 1998 must be an opportunity for us to become more aware and to launch new multidisciplinary and well-planned programmes so that the next century will not see an irreversible worsening of the state of the seas and oceans. In this connection, we are glad that the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) is willing to act as the secretariat for the world programme of action to protect the marine environment against land-based pollution. The Government of Monaco will be interested in this programme and any other action to eliminate organic pollution from the marine environment.

The Oceanographic Museum of Monaco is involved in the international initiative to protect coral reefs. We have organized an exhibition to make the public more aware of the need to protect coral, which is particularly sensitive to all forms of pollution and which, to develop, requires a healthy and protected environment. The UNEP programme on regional seas deserves encouragement.

I cannot conclude my statement without mentioning the very serious financial crisis that the Organization is going through. The measures taken by the Secretary-General are mere palliatives. If all Member States were

to live up to their commitments there would be no problem; there would be no need for working groups or committees of experts, which, after all, involve additional expenditure for the Organization.

In conclusion, I should like to repeat something that was said by a famous politician: the United Nations, like nations, shapes its own future; nothing good comes to it by chance; those that serve it are those that develop their inner strength.

The Acting President (*interpretation from French*): I call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Mozambique, His Excellency Mr. Leonardo Santos Simão.

Mr. Simão (Mozambique): On behalf of my Government and on my own behalf I wish to congratulate Mr. Diogo Freitas do Amaral upon his unanimous election as President of the General Assembly at its fiftieth session. I am particularly gratified that, for the first time since the creation of the United Nations, a son of Portugal — a country with which Mozambique entertains special ties of friendship and cooperation — is presiding over our deliberations. Mr. Freitas do Amaral's election to this important office bears testimony to his personal qualifications as an enlightened scholar and statesman, a man who has served his country with distinction and has contributed in the dissemination and codification of international law. My delegation, therefore, has no doubt that he will lead our work to a successful outcome. I pledge him our full support and cooperation.

I also wish to avail myself of this opportunity to put on record my delegation's appreciation of the manner in which Mr. Freitas do Amaral's predecessor, Mr. Amara Essy, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Côte d'Ivoire, presided over the deliberations of the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session. His performance during the last session of this very important gathering brought additional pride not only to his country but also to the African continent.

I wish to commend the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, for his continued commitment to the ideals of international peace and security. The people and Government of Mozambique are indebted to him for his dedication to the cause of peace in my country. He was, indeed, a key contributor to the successful outcome of the United Nations Operation in Mozambique (ONUMOZ).

Fifty years have elapsed since the establishment of the United Nations. There could not be a better opportunity for a collective assessment of its achievements and of the difficulties and challenges faced in its daily operations, as well as of its future prospects on the threshold of the twenty-first century.

The creation of the United Nations following the end of the Second World War represents, in our view, the most significant step forward in modern history, symbolizing a collective effort aimed at preventing the eruption of another global conflict and at making our world a much safer place. The shape of today's world is therefore a clear demonstration of the contribution of the United Nations in its 50 years of existence.

While it is true that we are still faced with numerous imperfections, uncertainties and challenges, one cannot deny the fact that significant achievements have been made by the Organization. Owing to the United Nations, it has been possible, to a great extent, to prevent global conflicts.

Thanks to the efforts of the United Nations, virtually all peoples of the world are today free from colonial domination. From this body, guided by the principle of self-determination, liberation movements, through the Special Committee on decolonization, aroused awareness of their individual fate. Today, the majority of those countries are here assembled as independent nations, fully exercising their inalienable right to self-determination. This is why the quest for peace and sovereign equality among nations has turned peace-keeping and economic development into two fundamental challenges before the Organization. All this progress has been possible owing to respect for and commitment to the purposes and principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter.

Ever since its independence, my country has attached great importance to respect for and adherence to international law. Mozambique was only nine months old as an independent nation when, in early 1976, its new Government decided to abide by Security Council resolution 253 (1968) of 29 May 1968 regarding the imposition of sanctions against the minority regime in the then Southern Rhodesia.

Despite the very high price our people have paid for their commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter, we feel honoured today to have contributed, to the best of our ability, to the implementation of international obligations. These facts were duly

recognized in Security Council resolution 386 (1976) of 17 March 1976, which, *inter alia*, emphasized that the application of sanctions by my Government, in full compliance with the decision of the Security Council, constituted an important contribution to the realization of United Nations objectives in Southern Rhodesia, in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter. Indeed, four years later Zimbabwe attained its independence.

The same applies to the common struggle for the eradication of apartheid. Mozambique was one of the countries most adversely affected by apartheid and its destructive policies in southern Africa. As will be recalled, within a few years following its independence Mozambique gained international admiration for its significant achievements in raising statistical indicators in key areas of national development — in particular, health care and education. Our economy was among the most promising and vibrant in the southern African region.

The situation of impoverishment we are facing today is a direct consequence of the war which ravaged our country for so many years. Our present difficult situation is a direct consequence of the price we paid for our continued commitment to the struggle against apartheid. Both the war situation and the situation of impoverishment in my country were created and promoted by the old racist regimes of former Southern Rhodesia and apartheid South Africa.

The peace that has prevailed in Mozambique since the signing of the Rome Agreement three years ago and the visible improvements in our economic situation underline clearly that with positive support and encouragement by the international community Mozambicans can find appropriate solutions to their differences and problems.

As I speak on this subject, I am reminded of a statement made by President Chissano in response to the Speaker of the Parliament of the Republic of South Africa, Mr. Freme Ginwala, during a State visit made to that sister country in February this year. On that occasion, the Speaker had apologized in moving terms for the horrible crimes committed against the people of Mozambique by successive apartheid Governments in Pretoria in an attempt to discourage the Government of Mozambique from supporting the cause of freedom and peace in the southern African region. In his reply President Chissano stressed that in so far as he was concerned the people of South Africa had nothing to apologize for because Mozambicans were aware of the consequences of their determination to support the struggle for justice and peace, not only in South Africa but also in the whole region. The President emphasized that in reality all the peoples of the region were victims of the same disease, apartheid, the elimination of which called for sacrifices.

Today, we all rejoice at seeing a free, united and non-racial South Africa, poised to fulfil its domestic and international responsibilities in efforts for regional peace, stability and cooperation among southern African nations.

With the eradication of apartheid and with our country surrounded by friendly and peace-loving neighbours, peace and stability are now a reality in Mozambique. Southern Africa is now a region of flourishing democracy. Together, we are fulfilling our collective responsibilities for regional economic development.

Last January, at the end of the peace-keeping operation in Mozambique, I came to New York and spoke to the Security Council about the progress made since the holding of the first multiparty general elections in my country. I indicated then that peace was indeed a tangible reality in Mozambique. Today, I am once again honoured to reiterate, before this body, my Government's high commitment to national reconciliation, so as to ensure that the peace we have all worked for is there to stay, forever.

Indeed, the advent of peace in my country has paved the way for Mozambicans to pull together for the economic development of the country. Accordingly, the Government that emerged from last year's general elections has drawn up a Five-Year Programme, from 1995 to 1999, in which the maintenance and further strengthening of peace, stability and national unity and reduction of absolute poverty, with emphasis on education, health, rural development and job creation, are our main objectives. Our Programme also aims at ensuring the resettlement of returnees and displaced persons and promoting the social integration of demobilized soldiers.

In addition, we are addressing other pressing issues before us. To this end I should like to emphasize my Government's resolve to continue working towards a lasting pluralistic democracy in our country. Accordingly, we deem it essential to ensure the normal functioning of our Parliament, the Assembly of the Republic. We believe its normal functioning constitutes one of the key factors for the consolidation of democracy in our society.

Within this perspective, my Government has recently established an institution which will be dealing with electoral issues on a permanent basis. The creation and consolidation of a new institution which will supervise our future elections will serve, in our view, as an important confidence-building measure for society and all political parties, for it will ensure confidence in future elections. As a matter of fact, we are preparing to begin next year the holding of municipal elections, which will complement the process that was initiated by the general elections in 1994.

The upgrading of the technical capacity of the national police is another Government key priority. As will be recalled, ONUMOZ was unable meaningfully to address the issue relating to the collection of weapons and their subsequent destruction. Needless to emphasize, those weapons represent a great danger not only to our own stability but also to that of our neighbours.

In this context, and on the basis of existing agreements between Mozambique and South Africa, joint operations are currently taking place between police forces of the two countries. As a result, thousands of weapons and explosives have already been collected and destroyed. Moreover, my Government is working harder in order to ensure that our police force is better prepared and equipped to deal more efficiently with transboundary crimes, particularly drug-trafficking and money-laundering.

On the other hand, my Government considers it to be of the utmost importance that the upgrading of police technical capacity should go hand in hand with similar progress in the strengthening of the judicial system, in order to support the work of the police effectively by prosecuting violators of our domestic laws and regulations. All possible support for our national efforts in this regard will be greatly appreciated.

Another area of paramount importance in efforts being undertaken by my Government is that of de-mining. In this regard I am happy to tell the Assembly that the National De-mining Commission has been established. We are currently engaged in final steps which will lead to the approval of our national de-mining policy and programme. Even before the formal approval of such a policy and programme, national de-mining efforts are already visible in the field throughout the country. With sufficient resources I believe we can make greater progress in getting rid of land-mines nationwide.

I wish at this juncture to thank all countries and institutions which have contributed to the de-mining programme in Mozambique, and I look forward to their continued support in the years ahead.

In this connection I should like to take this opportunity to voice my Government's full support for the initiatives under way to eliminate and ban these horrible weapons world wide.

In spite of all the difficulties, we see ourselves as a nation determined to build a better future for our people. Our economy has grown by over 6 per cent during the first six months of this year. On the other hand, negotiations have been concluded recently between the Government and trade unions in order to find a common platform for the hardships deriving from the implementation of the Economic Rehabilitation Programme that has been under way since 1987. In an attempt to address the increasing cost of living our people are enduring in this process we have agreed to raise the minimum wage.

This is why we launch a sincere appeal to our partners to abide by their commitments to a timely and unconditional disbursement of pledged funds within the framework of the Paris Consultative Group. Without fulfilment of those obligations, plans for a better future in our country may be in jeopardy, with all the concomitant negative consequences for the consolidation of the ongoing democratic process, particularly given the concerns over the growing drought threat to our region.

We, for our side, are committed to deepening further our economic and political reforms and to improving the system of tax collection, transparency and accountability in the management of public affairs.

A lot has been said about the prospects of the United Nations. I agree that our future will depend on the manner in which we address the needed reforms of our Organization. As my predecessor, the now-Prime Minister Dr. Pascoal Manuel Mocumbi, emphasized last year in his address to the Assembly, Mozambique shares a genuine interest in seeing a more representative Security Council. As previous speakers have stressed, the legitimacy and efficiency of that body will greatly depend on its representativeness. Efforts must therefore be made to ensure that the needed expansion of the Security Council not take place merely to accommodate the interests of those who are already privileged by the Council's current composition at the expense of the majority of nations. A realistic and innovative approach is essential to ensure that, in keeping with current new

realities, the interests of developing countries are fully respected, both qualitatively and quantitatively.

The reform exercise must also take into account the need for every nation to abide by its financial obligations. In that connection my Government, despite the well-known economic difficulties, has fully honoured its commitments regarding assessed contributions to the United Nations regular budget. We are now taking measures to ensure that all outstanding contributions to peace-keeping activities are settled as soon as possible. We cannot expect a well-functioning and dynamic United Nations unless we provide it with the needed funds. It is only through determined, concrete action that we can all demonstrate our individual seriousness and commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter.

The end of the cold war has given rise to mixed feelings about our efforts to address regional conflicts.

In Angola, the signing of the Lusaka Protocol between the Government and UNITA, coupled with the subsequent progress made by the parties to the peace process, has paved the way for a renewed hope in that sister country. I believe that Angola is closer to reaching a political settlement that will ensure the attainment of a lasting peace and tranquillity. My delegation encourages the Secretary-General to continue his efforts towards the full deployment of a peace-keeping contingent within the framework of the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM III).

The attainment of a lasting peace and tranquillity in Angola will be the best contribution to the regional stability and economic development we have long sought in southern Africa within the framework of the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC). In this connection, I am happy to recall that our Heads of State and Government, meeting last August at Johannesburg, welcomed the admission of Mauritius as a new member of our organization. With peace, democracy and growing partnership among its members, SADC is gradually becoming a vibrant and viable market ready to cooperate with other regions in a variety of fields of mutual interest.

Our efforts within SADC go beyond mere economic integration. In addition to discussions on peace-keeping and post-conflict peace-building mechanisms, we are also addressing concrete issues aimed at preventing possible conflicts between our nations. It is within this perspective that we view the ongoing discussion on such matters as the common utilization of international water courses, transboundary movements of people and goods, and crime prevention and control.

My delegation looks forward to a political settlement to the threatening situation in Burundi. It is our hope that the momentum created by the Secretary-General's recent visit to that country, as well as other important initiatives, will encourage the parties to work for reconciliation in the interest, not only of Burundi, but also of the Great Lakes region as a whole.

The need to stabilize the political situation in that country is strictly linked to the future prospects of the ongoing political stabilization in neighbouring Rwanda, where mankind has recently witnessed horrible crimes and the untold suffering of innocent civilians. No one would wish to see it repeated ever again.

Given what the Secretary-General in his annual report describes as the

> "combination of ethnic polarization in Burundi and Rwanda, massive circulation of arms, porous borders and transborder movements of refugees" *(A/50/1, para. 888)*,

political settlement in either country, coupled with the early return of refugees and displaced persons, is vital to avert a greater tragedy in the Great Lakes region. My Government therefore urges all the parties concerned to work towards this noble goal.

With regard to Liberia, my delegation welcomes the entry into force of the cease-fire on 26 August as a result of an earlier agreement by the Liberian factional leaders. Similarly, we view the swearing in of the State Council on 1 September 1995 as an important contribution to peace in that country. We believe that with tolerance and cooperation among the parties, elections in Liberia can take place within a year as the first step towards a lasting peace and tranquillity in that country.

The prospects for peace in Liberia open new hopes for the settlement of the conflict in neighbouring Sierra Leone. My delegation encourages the parties concerned to work together in the search for a negotiated settlement with a view to bringing about a lasting peace and tranquillity in that country.

In the Middle East, we welcomed last year, the implementation of the Peace Accords between Israel and the PLO, which resulted in autonomy for Gaza and

Jericho. Today, we note with satisfaction that further progress has been made in this peace process, culminating in the recent signing in Washington of new and promising agreements between the parties. This is, indeed, a step forward which we must encourage and support. My Government looks forward to similar progress in future negotiations on outstanding issues, including the Golan Heights, the status of Jerusalem, and other equally important issues for the final settlement of the deep-rooted conflict in the Middle East.

The situation in East Timor continues to be a matter of concern to my Government. In this context, my delegation takes note of the Secretary-General's assessment of the progress made so far in the negotiations between Portugal and Indonesia with a view to finding a political settlement to the conflict in that country. It is our hope that the forthcoming ministerial meeting scheduled to take place in London in January 1996 will lead to meaningful results.

Dialogue, not war or use of force, is the best choice for solving conflicts. It is through dialogue that nations and peoples of the world can effectively promote the international peace and security for which we are all longing in the years ahead. Therefore, dialogue must be further encouraged and supported wherever it is sought, be it in the countries of the former Yugoslavia, Somalia or elsewhere around the globe.

On the threshold of the twenty-first century, the quest for peace and economic development must be viewed within the context of the principles enunciated by the Secretary-General in his report entitled "An Agenda for Development: recommendations", where he rightly underlines that development, in its numerous dimensions,

> "should be recognized as the foremost and most far-reaching task of our time." *(A/49/665, para. 4)*

During the last few years the developing countries in general, and the least developed countries in particular, in spite of the existing hurdles, have made significant progress in their continued struggle to reverse economic and social stagnation. Within this framework, they have undertaken far-reaching political and socio-economic changes through the implementation of tough structural-adjustment programmes, the promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms and good governance. In addition to renewed commitments to conflict resolution, peace-keeping and post-conflict peace-building mechanisms, the efforts undertaken by developing countries should be supported and encouraged by the international community if we are to succeed in our common endeavours for peace and development in our respective countries.

As indicated by the President of the General Assembly in his inaugural address, quoting Pope Paul VI,

> "Development is the new name for peace." (*Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Plenary Meetings, 1st meeting, p. 9*)

All peoples and nations of the world must be committed to peace and development and pursue them with determination in the new international setting if we are to build a better and safer world for all. This is our challenge for the next century.

The meeting rose at 12.40 p.m.